

*From Joe Tuke  
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To: Local Authority Chief Executives

*By email*

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## **TROUBLED FAMILIES – INITIAL PLANS**

Following Louise Casey's letter to you of 16<sup>th</sup> December regarding the Government's announcement of additional funding to support the troubled families programme, I would like to provide some further detail about what the new programme could mean for your area and how we would like to work with you.

We have greatly appreciated the collaborative and positive way in which so many local authorities have engaged with us since the Troubled Families Team was established here in DCLG in November. Though recognising that we have an immense task ahead of us, there has also been a shared understanding of the, perhaps unique, opportunity ahead of us to achieve something really positive for these families and for the communities in which they live.

I am sure that the Prime Minister's announcement last week will have prompted many questions about how the £448 million will be spent and what this will mean for each local area. Some details still need to be determined and we will work with local areas as much as possible in doing so. While the timeframe is tight and we need to work at pace, we are also committed to getting this right and building on the good work already underway in many areas.

As a starting point, I would like to outline some of our initial plans and proposed next steps:

### **Preparation Funding**

Some areas are already fairly well advanced in their preparations for delivering this programme. However, last week's announcement will have highlighted that there is much to be done between now and April 2012 in order that you and your local partners are ready to make the most of the support and resources becoming available then. To help with this, we are making additional funding available in February 2012 to each upper-tier local authority to help you and your partners (both statutory and VCS) prepare for the introduction of these new arrangements.

**We are offering every local area a grant of £20k to be spent in the financial year 2011/12.** This offer supersedes any previous offer made for technical assistance as part of the Community Budgets programme. This funding should be used to facilitate the deployment of either senior-level internal resources to do this work and/or the purchasing of external advice and expertise focused on this programme.

This funding is intended to enable your local authority to undertake a number of specific tasks for which products will be required before April 2012:

- To undertake the analysis necessary to convert the indicative estimated numbers of troubled families in your areas (published last week) into verified figures of 'real' troubled families;
- To estimate how many of these families would already achieve the success criteria within existing or planned provision by 2015;
- To develop any service redesign plans required to expand provision and meet the needs of the remaining group of 'troubled families' in your area;
- To formulate the business case needed to underpin local resource commitments from within your own budgets and from other local partners – i.e. making the case for 60% investment required to match the 40% offered by the Troubled Families Team; and
- To plan the outcome tracking arrangements necessary to both focus services on the success criteria and demonstrate success.

If you believe your area may require more than £20k to undertake these tasks, please contact us to discuss this. However, further funding will only be available in exceptional circumstances, where there is clear evidence that this funding is necessary and will be spent within this financial year.

Some of this preparatory work will need to continue to develop and evolve as the programme becomes established but this additional funding is being made available to ensure that robust foundations are in place from the outset.

If you would like to accept this offer, **please provide confirmation via email from your Chief Executive or relevant Head of Service.** We would appreciate it if you could send this email to [families.team@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:families.team@communities.gsi.gov.uk) by **13<sup>th</sup> January at the latest.**

### **Defining 'Troubled Families'**

As mentioned above, we have now released estimated numbers of 'troubled families' per local authority – your own number was included in the letter you received from Louise Casey. A briefing note entitled "Troubled Families estimates explanatory note", which explains the derivation of these estimates is available at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/newsroom/pdf/2053538.pdf>. The estimate for your area will form a basis for liaison with you over the coming weeks as you pull together the list of actual troubled families in your area:

- In January, we will issue an 'update note' including guidance on the types of families that we wish areas to identify for the purposes of this Troubled Families Programme. You can expect this to focus upon those families not in work, whose children are not attending school and who are involved in crime and/or anti-social behaviour. Our intention is to provide a simple and workable definition which helps you identify the right families within your current administrative systems.
- In February, we want each area to provide us with its initial analysis of the total number of actual troubled families locally who meet this definition. We

would not, however, expect this number to be substantially different from our estimates.

- During February and March, we will work with you to agree these numbers and, thereby set a baseline figure on which your funding arrangements will be based.

### **Success Measures**

As announced last week, the majority of the £448m programme budget will be payable when local authorities and their partners achieve success with families. This is intended to ensure that this money truly breaks the inter-generational cycles of deprivation and need, in which many of these families live.

The Prime Minister has said that 'turning lives around' means getting parents into work, children attending school, reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and cutting costs for the State. The success measures, against which payments will be released, will be based on these measures. Our goal is to produce a framework which is simple and workable for local authorities, but also means something to the families themselves and which can contribute to a sense of personal aspiration. We are discussing options within Whitehall and with a few local areas – further details will be sent out in January.

### **Troubled Family Coordinators**

Much of the media coverage last week focused on the Government's commitment to create a network of troubled family coordinators (or 'Trouble-Shooters', as they were referred to in the announcement). We envisage working very closely with the people appointed to these roles as part of our partnership with local areas. We expect these individuals to grip your local programme at both strategic and delivery levels. Attached is a note outlining some of the main duties and responsibilities which we will expect like these coordinators to undertake.

Louise Casey's letter set out the amount that is available to your authority for this purpose from April 2012. **Please start making plans for the appointment of these staff now so that you have someone/some people in post from the start of April.**

### **Contact**

There is a lot to be done in a short space of time if we are to make the most of the opportunities that the PM's announcement provides – not least the opportunity to start making the savings and/or efficiencies that evidenced and targeted interventions with troubled families will generate. The need for urgency and pace makes it important that we can maintain close contact with those people who will lead on this programme of work in your area throughout this process. I would like to thank those areas who have already provided contact details for a lead officer in their local authority with whom we should communicate, pending the appointment of Troubled Families coordinators. If you have not already done so, please could you provide us (by 9<sup>th</sup> January) with these contact details.

We look forward to working closely and productively with you.



**JOE TUKE**

## **Troubled Families Coordinators**

**Background:** As part of a national implementation plan for the Government's ambition to turn around the lives of the country's most troubled families, the Troubled Families Team has announced a commitment to fund a national network of troubled families coordinators.

**Funding:** As per Louise Casey's letter of 16<sup>th</sup> December, your local authority will be offered money to fund a person/ people to perform this role locally. As such, we expect most coordinators to be employees of the local authority. However, alternative arrangements with other local partners (e.g. the Police, the NHS, JobCentre Plus) may be agreed at a local level in consultation with the Troubled Families Team.

### **Timing:**

- Recruitment should begin immediately, with a view to having candidates in post from April 2012, when funding will be available.
- As outlined in Joe Tuke's letter of 22<sup>nd</sup> December, additional funding will be available in February 2012 to prepare for the introduction of the new programme. This funding may be used for the early appointment of coordinators, subject to advance agreement with the Troubled Families Team.

**Core Task:** To lead the troubled families programme locally, as a senior level strategic coordinator, who will grip delivery and radically boost the pace and scale of work locally to turn around the lives of their population of 'troubled families'.

### **Main Responsibilities:**

The main responsibilities of the coordinators will be:

- Taking responsibility for identifying the most troubled families - the numbers, names and locations of the families in their area;
- Using the extra money provided by the Troubled Families Programme to lever all the remaining money and resources needed for their local programme;
- Ensuring local agencies (e.g. police, Job Centre Plus, health organisations, schools etc.) work together to put a robust plan of action in place to deal with the families;

- Focusing local action on the right results for the target families – ensuring the local area has gripped delivery and is on track to deliver against the success criteria set by DCLG;
- Ensuring that the progress of their local programme is being monitored and fed back to the Troubled Families Team.

### **The Network:**

In addition to leading work at a local level, the coordinators will play a vital role as part of a national network of local leaders who can work with the Government to drive delivery of this national commitment. The national network will:

- Form part of a coalition of ambassadors, driving a radical step change in the pace and scale of work with troubled families across England;
- Ensure that local areas are learning from the best, sharing the most effective service models and cutting-edge approaches to service redesign, efficient and unbureaucratic systems to track results and capture the potential savings of this work; and
- Offer constructive challenge and support. If areas are struggling, Government departments and other areas will work with them to get back on track.

To form this network, at least one person will be identified by each upper-tier local authority as the named coordinator. In areas with high numbers of troubled families, small teams may be established using this funding, but a singled named leader should still be nominated.