
Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 13 September 2012

Report of the Director of Children's Services

"TROUBLED FAMILIES" IN DUDLEY

Purpose of Report

1. To provide information about the Department for Communities and Local Government Troubled Families initiative and its implementation in Dudley

Background

National Context

2. The Troubled Families programme is for the period 2012 to 2015 Nationally, it is led from the Department of Communities and Local Government and Louise Casey is the national programme director.
3. The initiative is a three year funded programme. It defines "Troubled Families" as being households who:
 - Are involved in crime and anti-social behaviour
 - Have children not in school
 - Have an adult on out of work benefits
 - Cause high cost to the public purse
4. Nationally and locally these themes cut across the responsibilities of government departments; public sector agencies such as the Police, Councils and Job Centre Plus; the public and private sectors e.g. worklessness.
5. National work states that there are 120,000 families who are defined as "troubled." "Troubled" is taken to mean that they experience all three of the themes which are the aim of the programme i.e. truancy, worklessness, anti-social behaviour or high cost to the public purse.
6. In addition, it is argued that significant resources are already allocated to addressing the challenges of these themes in the funding of Councils or national agencies such as the Police or Job Centre Plus. For this reason, it is argued that the initiative is also aimed at inviting reflection and action over time to change or re-design services and systems which are costly and for which there may be a better, more efficient alternative.
7. Locally, using the Government's figures, it is believed that we have 740 families whose experience reflects the situation as defined by the Government. In year one of the programme Dudley Council is committed to begin working with 250 families.

8. The Troubled Families (Attachment Fee) Grant determination 2012/13: 31/2046 Section 31 sets out the funding allocation for Dudley as given below. In addition there is some co-ordination funding and a system of Payment By Results.

Year One: (250 families)

- Coordination 2012/13, £100,000
- Attachment Fee 2012/13, £665,600
- Maximum £167,000 available as payment by results associated with the year one cohort of 250 families

Year two funding 2013/14 (250 families):

- Coordination, £100,000
- Attachment Fee, £499,000
- Maximum of £333,000 available as payment by results associated with the year two cohort of 250 families

Year three funding 2014/15 (240 families):

- Coordination, £100,000
- Attachment Fee, £320,000
- Maximum of £480,000 available as payment by results associated with the year three cohort of 240 families

9. Dudley Council has committed to work with the identified 740 families over a period of three years with the aim of supporting them to avoid their involvement in anti-social behaviour, truancy or worklessness. In this way, it is believed that the families can avoid or minimise being users of publically provided services through these and so reduce burden on the tax payer.
10. The Troubled Families programme is also linked to other programmes such as the European Social Fund Support for Families Contract 2012-15. The West Midlands contract holder for this is EOS Ltd.
11. The Trouble Families initiative has been supported through the publication of national guidance *The Troubled Families Programme - Financial Framework March 2012* and email updates from the national Troubled Families Unit. Dudley Council's Troubled Families Coordinator feeds into the national Network of Coordinators. Meetings are facilitated by Department for Communities and Local Government officials.

Action in Dudley

12. Local planning based on developing national understandings has been underway since December 2011.
13. Steering Group: a multi-agency Steering Group, chaired by Brendan Clifford, has been established comprising the following Agencies:
- Dudley Council's Directorates of Children's Services; Adult Community and Housing Services; Urban Environment; and Chief Executive's
 - West Midlands Police
 - EOS Ltd

- Department for Work and Pensions
- Dudley Council for Voluntary Services
- Dudley Community Partnership
- NHS Dudley Public Health Service
- Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group

Data / information

14. Dudley staff have worked to ascertain the relevant sources of data which would be used to confirm which families have been using services connected to anti-social behaviour, truancy and worklessness.
15. Significant effort has been made to source and check the information. Through an agreed process, data has been shared with Job Centre Plus who are responding to confirm that the data is correct thus created a cohort to whom action can be directed in Dudley.
16. Information Governance: a Memorandum of Understanding for the sharing of information has been signed between the Council and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Model of working with the "troubled families"

17. Guidance states that an effective model of working with "Troubled Families" is based on a "Keyworker" approach. The Keyworker role is based on the allocation of an individual member of staff who works closely with the Family, and assists them to face the complexities of their contact with public and private agencies and to alter their behaviour in terms of worklessness, truancy and anti-social behaviour.
18. This approach is being adopted in Dudley. However, it is recognised that some related activity is already underway in the Borough eg the Children's Services Directorate Family Intervention Project. Therefore it is important that all relevant strands of work are properly integrated and coherently managed.
19. Similarly, with regard to worklessness, the Government had already initiated activity through the Department for Work and Pensions whereby a private company, EOS Ltd, has European Social Fund money to work with families in order to help adults back into work.
20. In addition, it is recognised that testing a range of models which add value to the initiative will be worthwhile and so schemes working with the voluntary and community sector are also being considered.

Systems change / service re-design

21. Systems change / service re-design is a longer-term aim of the Troubled Families initiative. It is argued that public funds are already being used to address anti-social behaviour, truancy and worklessness, but sometimes in an inefficient manner. Therefore partners are also asked to consider whether organisational changes can be made that will provide greater value for money. This is an aspect

of the programme that we recognise as important but our immediate priority is to start engaging with our year one cohort.

Finance

22. The Prime Minister has made available £448 million over three years from 2012 to 2015, drawn from the budgets of six government departments. This represents 40 per cent of the average cost of turning 120,000 families around using proven intervention techniques, with the remaining 60 per cent coming from local budgets.
23. The relevant Department of Communities and Local Government grant funding details are included in the main body of the report within the background section.

Funding received from DCLG for 2012/13 is as follows:

- Troubled Families Coordination - £100,000
- Attachment Fee to support 250 families £665,600
- Total Funding **£765,600**

24. Results Based Payments are only available for claiming when successful outcomes are achieved with the 250 families. The Results Based funding forecast for 2012/13 is £166,400; it has been assumed that this funding will be claimed after 2012/13.
25. Payments for subsequent years and the level of such grants will be subject to agreement between the Troubled Families Team and the Chief Executive and very much dependant upon Dudley's 2012/13 successful outcomes.

Law

26. There is no statutory requirement to comply with the Troubled Families project as initiated by the Department of Communities and Local Government. However all local authorities, including Dudley, have committed to work on this agenda and in return are in receipt of the grant funding as described.

Equality Impact

27. The purpose of this programme is to improve the long term life experiences and chances of some of the most disadvantaged families in the borough, thereby helping to close some of the most significant equality gaps in areas such as school attendance and education attainment, rates of offending and household incomes.

Recommendation

28. That Committee note and comment on the content in the report.



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