

**Report to Scrutiny Committee**

**Families with Complex Needs (including Family Solutions – ‘troubled families’)**

**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

**Purpose of report: To provide information about the development of Family Solutions and Community Budget Family with Complex Needs programme, including the procurement of a targeted volunteer service**

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## **1. Background**

The national programme ‘Troubled Families’ began with a launch by David Cameron in late 2010 aiming to turnaround the lives of 120,000 of the most ‘troubled families’. In Essex, this number is estimated by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to be 2,200. In Essex we have called this programme ‘Family Solutions’ and we have agreed with DCLG that we work with at least 370 of the 2,200 families by March 2013.

Defining what constitutes a ‘troubled family’ is difficult. The DCLG definition is based on 3 main criteria:

- youth crime/antisocial behaviour
- persistent unauthorised absence from school
- adults in a family being in receipt of out of work benefit

and a fourth local factor – broadly defined in Essex.

Funding from DCLG takes the form of a mixture of up front ‘attachment fee’, co-ordination costs financial support and payment by results (PbR). There is a weighted approach to payment with the first year being mostly composed of attachment fee.

DCLG estimate the cost of each intervention (change programme for families) to be £10,000 of which they will contribute £4,000. The rest of the funding has to be sourced through local partnerships.

With the development of Community Budgets across Essex, Family Solutions will merge with the development of Families with Complex Needs multi-agency teams, of which there will be eight across Essex from October 2013.

## **2. Family Solutions Teams – Phase 1**

Four quadrant based teams have been established from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2012. The teams, supported by a team manager and practice supervisor, are composed of staff with a variety of skills including social work and education skills. The focus within the teams is on achieving results against the troubled family framework to maximise funding opportunities. The criteria for referral have a focus on educational disengagement, youth crime prevention and adult basic skills as well as agreed local discretion areas.

There is a staff base of circa 50, all recruited on their ability to work collaboratively with families. A key philosophy of the new service is that families generally want to achieve the best outcome for their children and Family Solutions should assist and not hinder this aspiration.

The teams are supported by an additional 10 Youth Offending Service Early Intervention and Prevention project workers, seconded on an initial 12 month basis and funded by YOS Partnership. Additionally, there has been good engagement with Job Centre Plus which has been able to shape the type of provision needed to help adults back to sustainable employment and to develop local Job Centre Plus links.

The Education Welfare Service has also committed valuable strategic time through a 2 day a week deployment of a senior manager within EWS to build the critical links with schools.

The staffing costs for 2013/14 are £1,874,767 which is funded 100% from the troubled families attachment fee funding.

The teams are based in relevant and accessible community settings to encourage as much practical engagement with children and families as possible.

The teams are located:

- West – Watgardens- Harlow
- Mid – Carousel Centre- Braintree
- North – Green lodge- Tendring
- South – Rainbow Family Centre- Basildon

A great deal of work has also taken place to try to identify the families who will be worked with in order to meet the DCLG requirements for continued funding. To date, over 1,800 potential families/ young people have been identified using the YOS and education data bases as a 'filter'. Any potential family identified through these data bases are then shared with Department for work and Pensions (DWP) to see how many of the names are also claiming out of work benefit.

Of the 1,800 names 487 (or 27%) have been identified as families in receipt of out of work benefits. This does make achieving the full PbR claim of £800 per family unlikely as the majority of families are not in receipt of benefits.

One key plan for future is to develop parent to parent support. This will be developed under the framework of the 'Families with Complex Needs' Community Budget Strand.

### **3. Phase 2: Families with Complex Needs**

The proposal in the Families with Complex Needs Whole Essex Community Budgets (WECB) Business Case is to establish a new approach across Essex to work holistically with disadvantaged families with multiple difficulties. This approach builds on the Family Solutions (Troubled Families) Teams, establishing 4 further teams in October 2013

Therefore Phase 2 will see the establishment of 8 family teams each working intensively each year with up to 180 disadvantaged families with multiple difficulties for up to a year. Teams will be both multi-disciplinary and multi-agency with staff and resources from ECC children's services, district council services, Health, Mental Health, and others. The teams will be located in accessible premises in the areas that they serve. The eight teams will be cover:

- Castle Point and Rochford
- Harlow and Uttlesford
- Epping and Brentwood
- Chelmsford and Maldon
- Braintree
- Basildon
- Colchester
- Tendring

There is the potential to establish 4 further teams in 2014 (one for each District) with the option for further expansion in 2015.

The teams will provide an evidence-based multi-agency family-centred approach to support and enable families to identify what to change, build resilience, improve their lives long-term and become active participants in local communities.

This new approach requires significant cultural change by and within all agencies and professionals working with children and families, in working practices, in roles and responsibilities, in multi-agency co-operation and in the way in which they all engage with families.

Stakeholder engagement is a critical and a significant amount of work has already been carried out with the district, borough and city councils both collectively and individually to secure their involvement and their commitment to the project. Action has also been taken to engage with health via the Clinical Commissioning Groups and Public health. This work is on-going and a key milestone is achieving sign up to contributing to the teams by the end of March 2013.

## **Volunteer Programme**

As part of the Business Case there is a plan to commission a peer mentoring/volunteer programme to offer longer term support to families by local volunteers and the opportunity for family members to become volunteers themselves when they have been through the programme. This approach builds upon community resources and resilience by extending the opportunities for volunteering and peer support.

The plan is to develop a specification for this targeted volunteer programme. The organisation(s) who gains the contract will be responsible for recruitment, training, support and supervision of the volunteers. The size of the contract will depend on the resources available from partners for the volunteer programme.

A workshop has been held with voluntary sector organisations to discuss the form and shape of the specification.

The targeted volunteer programme is part of the Community Budgets – Families with Complex Needs programme, but it also links to the Community budgets – Strengthening Communities programme which is about stimulating voluntary and community resources across Essex.