



Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Troubled Families Programme

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Troubled Families – reminder of criteria

- Are involved in youth crime or anti-social behaviour
- Have children who are regularly truanting or not in school (including excluded pupils)
- Have an adult on out of work benefits
- Cause high costs to the taxpayer

Reminder of Our Approach

- Collaboration across Council and partners
- Maximising outcomes for families
- Maximising quality of life for communities
- Maximising efficiencies for all agencies
- Providing predictive data sets for sharper targeting
- Sustainable into the future

Government support for the programme and linked programmes

- Government estimates investing in a Troubled Family can save £29,000 per year out of the £75,000 they cost across agencies per year
- Money paid to Central Bedfordshire as a grant in 2013/14 is £485,400. In 2014/15 only £70,000 will be outside Payment by Results (PBR). We will work with 183 families to enable us to claim £194,500 as PBR on outcomes
- New incentive for local services such as Police, Health and Social Services to work more closely together to reduce costs and improve outcomes for families
- Central Bedfordshire submitted bid to Early Intervention Foundation for support. Did not achieve “Wave 1” but was allocated “Partner” status
- Bid placed with Department of Local Government and Transport to support a more integrated approach to Domestic Violence – bid not evaluated yet

Lessons Learned and emerging issues so far

- Domestic Violence / Abuse is present in all the family histories and a more joined up approach to this issue within the Council and Partners is required.
- Housing is a significant issue – broken tenancies, rent arrears and anti-social behaviour is prevalent
- Health needs are high and families pay little attention to preventative care – re-commissioning of health items to address mental health issues is continuing to be developed by way of a more partnership approach going forward
- Drug and alcohol use associated with mental health issues – these are key issues for preventative actions in Central Bedfordshire
- Truancy and exclusion are issues with these families and early signs are that families respond to practical help
- These families have been around and known to our services for generations

Emerging issues and impact of the models adopted – Family Intervention Factors

- A dedicated worker dedicated to the family really helps
- Who looks at what is really happening for the family as a whole is key – this began with Council staff and now with other agencies, e.g. Police Community Support Officers (PCSO'S) and the voluntary sector
- Practical hands on support is key, e.g. a skip to clear rubbish from the garden
- An assertive and challenging approach – staff are being re-trained or trained to work with families in a consistent way
- The approach needs to be backed by an agreed plan and common purpose amongst the relevant services

Next steps in Central Bedfordshire

- Increased focus of programme plan on interventions with families (early days lots of time spent on data capture across agencies)
- Review and refresh working with other partner agencies to deepen cooperative working and to start to map efficiencies
- Make maximum use of commissioned partnership arrangement with voluntary sector agency “4YP”
- Further develop consistency for families in interventions and sanctions applied to families
- Embed performance monitoring and reporting through scorecard approach (up to date copy to be circulated at the meeting)

Questions and Answers

Q: Are Looked After Children involved?

A: Very occasionally if they are placed with their families but most Looked After Children will be placed outside of their families

Q: Has there been success?

A: See balanced scorecard of up to date outcomes circulated at meeting

Q: Is there more than one worker per family?

A: There will be one family link worker but other staff, e.g. children's social workers may also be involved to do statutory work. Teachers etc., will also contribute

Questions and Answers

Q: Are other agencies involved?

A: Yes, and the more we learn as the programme develops, the more we involve other relevant agencies

Q: Are the families affected by welfare changes?

A: Yes, but this will vary according to families. Links are made to the programme of support to families experiencing welfare changes