

# Troubled Families Programme

Lessons for future public service reform



November 2014

## Acknowledgements

London Councils would like to thank the many individuals and organisations who contributed to this report. We are particularly grateful for those London boroughs that have provided case studies and insights into their work.

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# Executive Summary

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The experience of the Troubled Families Programme, with councils taking a strong local grip on the delivery of integrated services to families with complex needs, offers important lessons for the wider reform of public services.

There is currently a lively national debate on the best models for devolution and integration including, for example, on the integration of health and adult care, that could be informed by this experience.

The Troubled Families Programme built on earlier 'whole family' approaches introduced in 2006, which worked with a small number of families. The programme, therefore, offered a unique opportunity to bring services together in localities at a greater scale, to improve outcomes, cut costs and demonstrate the benefits of 'wraparound' interventions.

The rationale for the programme, which was launched in April 2012, was the government's estimate that 120,000 of the most troubled families accounted for £9 billion of public spending. £8 billion of this was being spent on reacting to the problems these families have and can cause in their communities and only £1 billion being spent on preventing those problems from occurring in the first place.

The Troubled Families Programme had a £448 million budget pooled from a number of different departments including Education, Work and Pensions, Justice, Home Office and Communities and Local Government.

The expansion of the Troubled Families Programme to deliver family intervention to even more families is a significant vote of confidence in this devolved approach and the capacity of councils to lead this effort and to deliver positive results.

This report sets out case studies of different borough approaches to the programme and identifies the learning so far as a basis for the further development of the programme and draws out the implications for developing locally pooled budgets for delivery of other public services more effectively and efficiently.

Personalised, 'wraparound' interventions, co-location of professionals working with families and

strong local leadership have been identified as critical elements of success.

Through their innovative work under the Troubled Families Programme, London local authorities have offered a successful demonstration of how agencies can work with those with complex and multiple issues. By delivering the right services and the right interventions at the right time in a family's journey, local authorities and their partners can start to truly manage 'complex dependency' and reduce later service demand.

Over the next five years there will be an opportunity for areas to:

- work with more families that have complex and multiple problems and that are a high cost to public services continue to improve their assessment of a family's needs and co-ordination of services
- go further in terms of other local authority services being aligned with the Troubled Families approach. For example, gangs, wider social services, Youth Offending Teams are all in such a category and there is potential for even more public sector agencies to become involved in delivery of the programme
- achieve greater joint investment, with partners, in early intervention and prevention to avoid longer term need for reactive, specialist services.

The delivery of the Troubled Families Programme is a successful demonstration of how central government can work with local government and other agencies to bring budgets and services together in a pro-active way at a local level. The programme has benefited from the trust shown in local government to get on and deliver, demonstrating how freeing up local authorities from the central control can spark local initiative, local innovation and results.

The programme has demonstrated that devolving responsibility and funding for a number of other key public services to the local level – where the benefits of integration and personalisation can be realised – offers a unique opportunity to bring services together to improve outcomes and cut costs.

There is now a clear opportunity for central government to capitalise on this template in its approach to other groups with complex multiple needs, by reforming narrow departmental approaches, devolving funding and liberating local government to deliver results.

## Critical success factors

**Personalised, 'wraparound' interventions** - The nature of complex dependency necessitates personalised, intensive interventions that are highly tailored to the recipients' individual circumstances. This is an inherently local approach that will often see key workers working with an individual or family throughout the entirety of the intervention and prevents 'cold' referrals to services that could see people fall through the cracks between organisations and services.

**Importance of the Key Worker** - The role is pivotal in providing challenge and support to families. Key Workers develop a relationship with the family and provide support. They also, however, take a persistent, assertive and challenging approach with families. They are there to get to grips with the family's problems, and work intensively with them to help change their lives for the better for the long term. They are responsible for helping the family navigate the 'system' and work with other professionals to coordinate the multi-agency work with a family.

**Multi-agency working/co-location** - It is the multi-agency approach that allows all aspects of an individual or family's needs to be taken account of as a whole. Having local agencies working together in close proximity also allows them to react nimbly and devise pragmatic solutions or 'workarounds' to the barriers they encounter.

**Strong relationships** - Good relationships between local agencies are a feature of high-performing local public services. The Troubled Families multi-agency teams have been made possible thanks to the strong relationships that exist between partners at the local level.

**Commitment and leadership** - Strong local relationships are reinforced by buy in from senior management nationally and locally. This ensures that commitment cascades down through individual organisations and also that links to other local organisations can be made quickly. Strong local political leadership is also a critical element of success.

**Data sharing** - Getting the right data sharing arrangement in place is critical for integrated programmes to be successful. In the case of Troubled Families, multi-agency information sharing and analysis leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the issues in the family thereby informing better care plans and ultimately more positive outcomes.

# 1. Introduction

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The Troubled Families Programme was officially launched by the Prime Minister in 2012, with the aim of turning around the lives of 120,000 families within this Parliament.

The idea of targeting people with multiple and complex needs was not new. There had been a number of policy papers and national research that looked into the problem. There had also been government action, the previous government's Respect Programme, for example, sought to address anti-social behaviour within communities.

The introduction of the Troubled Families Programme itself was based on Whole Family/Family Intervention approaches that had been introduced in 2006, under the previous government. These programmes were at that point only working with a small number of families. An evaluation of these programmes did however suggest that taking a multi-agency, intensive, whole family approach could make a real difference in the lives of the families<sup>1</sup>.

The 2011 riots highlighted the urgency of this type of approach. In implementing the Troubled Families Programme, local authorities were tasked with taking the learning from these family intervention programmes, scaling up and applying the approach to a much larger group of families.

The government pledged £448 million to the programme, drawn and pooled from a number of departments, including Communities and Local Government, Education, Home Office, Justice and Work and Pensions. The current phase of the Troubled Families Programme began in April 2012 and runs until March 2015.

For the purposes of the programme, Troubled Families are identified as those that have multi-faceted issues and who cause problems to the community around them, putting high costs on the public sector.

The government defines Troubled Families as households which:

- have children not in school
- are involved with crime or anti-social behaviour
- have an adult on out of work benefits
- cause high costs to the public purse.

As such, the programme aims to:

- get children back into school
- reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour
- put adults on a path back to work
- reduce costs to the public purse.

The Troubled Families Programme is being delivered using a payment by results model. An attachment fee is available up-front, with a further payment when the family has been turned around. For each family, a total of £4,000 is available. Local authorities are also funded to employ a Troubled Families Coordinator. Their role is to grip local delivery and work with local partners like senior police and health commissioners.

As part of the rationale for applying the approach to a larger group of families, the government's estimated that £9 billion was being spent annually on the 120,000 most troubled families. Of this, an estimated £8 billion was being spent reacting to the problems these families have and cause. For example, costs associated with taking children into care, or the cost of a child being on a child protection plan and the significant criminal justice costs of children and adults committing crime were included in this figure, as well as the costs of evicting people from social housing, benefit payments to such families, the cost of drug and alcohol dependency, specialist schooling and health costs. It was estimated that only £1 billion was being spent on helping families to solve and prevent problems from occurring in the first place<sup>2</sup>.

At the Spending Review last year, it was announced that the Troubled Families Programme would be expanded to work with 400,000 more families from 2015 to 2020, with £200 million funding for 2015 to 2016. The Budget in March 2014 announced that work with up to 40,000 of these families would begin in this financial year.

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1 Department for Education, Monitoring and evaluation of family intervention services and projects between February 2007 and March 2011, December 2011.  
2 Department for Communities and Local Government, Cost of Troubled Families, January 2013



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The Department for Communities and Local Government has commissioned a full evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme, which this report does not seek to replicate. Two and half years into the delivery of the programme, however, this report will explore how it is working in London and what lessons can be learnt at this stage in terms of the future of the programme and public service reform more generally.

This report sets out the latest performance information for the Troubled Families Programme in London which shows that it has had a significant impact on the lives of those families and their communities.

In each locality the approach has been tailored to local conditions for maximum impact. We have, therefore, included case studies from very different local authorities to show how different boroughs and their partners have responded to the programme. We have also picked out the key learning points from each case study.

Each troubled family is different and this has been part of the challenge in the past which has led to them becoming trapped between different public services rather than supported by them. This report sets out a number of case studies of individual families to illustrate the challenges faced by the families and the professionals working with them. They also illustrate the positive changes that have occurred in individual families as a result of the programme which performance information cannot capture.



## 2. The Social and Financial Challenge

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“The system is a costly gyroscope that spins round the families, keeping them at the heart of the system, stuck exactly where they are.”<sup>3</sup>

### The Social Challenge

On the surface, the Troubled Families Programme is about families that are ‘troubled’ and that ‘cause trouble’. Looking closely at these families, one sees an abundance of social and personal issues that have persisted through generations. In many of the families there is real sense of chaos and violence. While this has a significant negative impact on their neighbours and their community, in some ways the most significant harm is to the family themselves. Some families experience multiple and complex problems, which are often long-standing and multi-generational, families where there is poor parenting, addiction problems, criminal behaviour, poor physical and mental health, and the effects of domestic violence and abuse.

For children, growing up in a family which has complex, multiple problems, there can be lasting adverse effects on their life chances.

The Understanding Troubled Families report published in July 2014, two years into the programme, revealed that, on average **nine serious problems** exist in any one of these families at one time.

Due to the number and complexity of the problems, these families are usually known to public services. Families with multiple and complex problems often ‘touch’ the system at various points with a number of agencies in regular contact with the same family. In the past, however, the contact from different agencies will have often been fragmented and uncoordinated, illustrated by the quote at the beginning of this chapter. So while schools, social services, job centres, health services, housing, the police and the criminal justice system may all have regular contact with such families, this may not always mean that the needs of these families are being identified or met.

In contrast, the Troubled Families Programme is designed to take a grip on these families and coordinate their interaction with the agencies involved in their lives. Families are often referred to a Troubled Families Team when they have become ‘stuck’ and more mainstream services are not changing the outcomes for the family. The Troubled Families Programme has also encouraged agencies to take a cumulative assessment of a family’s problems as opposed to focusing on individual services’ thresholds. Through working with families this way, underlying problems such as substance misuse, violence, dysfunctional relationships, mental and physical health problems can be addressed and families can be enabled to turn their own lives around, become more resilient and avoid re-referral to statutory services.

### The Financial Challenge: Managing Demand on Services

While turning around the lives of families and unlocking their potential is a positive outcome in itself, there is also a clear financial rationale for the Programme. The families on the Programme tend to be high-cost to the public purse, drawing on local authority and partners’ budgets in terms of child protection costs, rent arrears, evictions, police callouts, benefit payments, and criminal justice proceedings. These costs were explored in the Department of Communities and Local Government reports *Cost of Troubled Families*<sup>4</sup> and *The Fiscal Case for Working with Troubled Families*<sup>5</sup>.

With the current, widespread pressure on public sector budgets, there is a financial imperative to reduce troubled families’ demand on acute services through more efficient working practices.

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3 Relational Welfare Hilary Cottam Soundings Issue 48 Summer 2011

4 Cost of Troubled Families, Department for Communities and Local Government, January, 2013

5 The Fiscal Case for Working with Troubled Families Department for Communities and Local Government, February, 2013

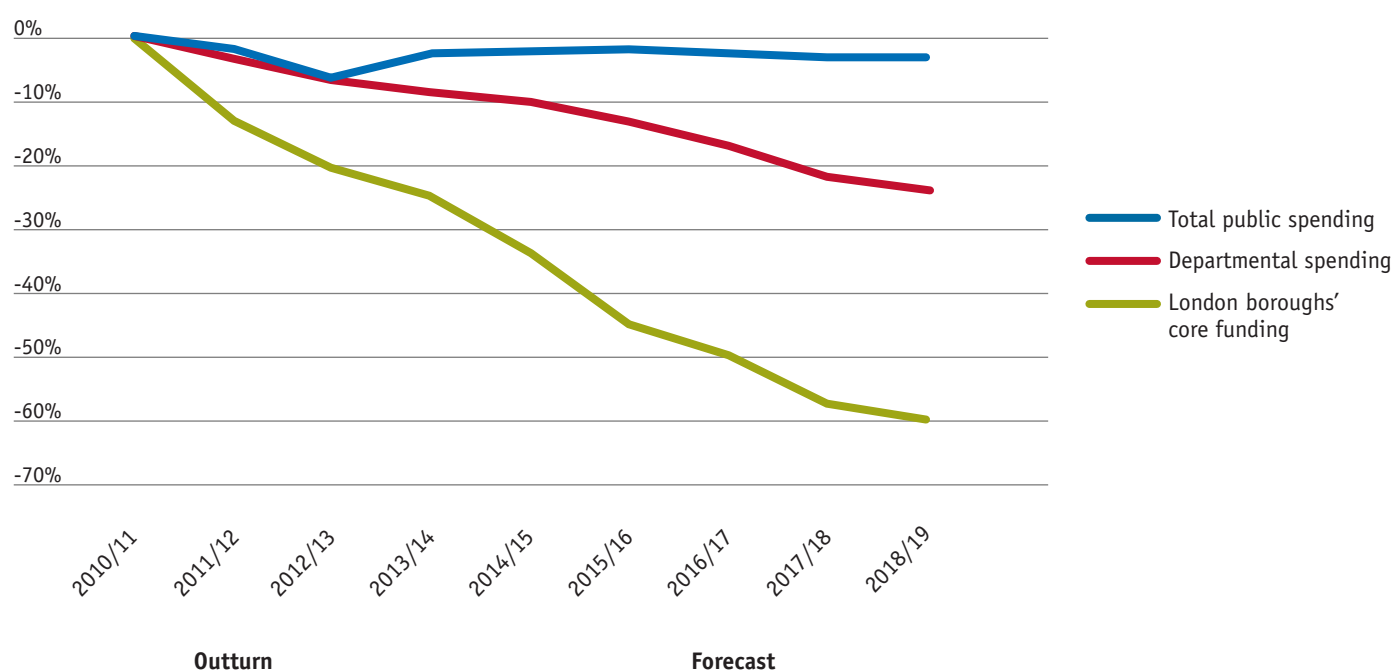


Cross-sector initiatives such as these have the potential not only to deliver better outcomes, but importantly to contribute to deficit reduction. Savings generated by initiatives like Troubled Families can make a valuable contribution to public spending reductions, which will continue to be a prominent feature in the next parliament with all parties promising to continue with deficit reduction. The government has already set out plans to cut departmental spending by £8.7 billion in 2015/16, and to hit the current borrowing targets, without any further tax increases or cuts to welfare spending, the government would need to cut departmental spending by a further £37.6 billion between 2015/16 and 2018/19<sup>6</sup>.

Local government is facing unprecedented financial challenges. Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, London local government will have seen a reduction in core funding of 34 per cent in real terms. This trend is set to continue. Over the next five years, it is estimated that core government grant will have fallen by a further £1.8 billion or 40 per cent in real terms.

This means a 60 per cent real terms reduction in core funding by 2018/19. The chart below illustrates the relative severity of this picture for councils. It also means that London local government is only halfway through its estimated funding reduction.

**Cumulative real terms percentage change in core local government funding compared with whole public spending 2010-11 to 2018-19**



Sources: DCLG, LGF Settlements 2010-11 to 2015-16 (illustrative); OBR, Economic & Fiscal Outlooks 2011 to 2014.

Notes: London Boroughs' core funding is defined as Formula Grant until 2012-13 and Settlement Funding Assessment from 2013-14; Total public spending is headline Total Managed Expenditure (OBR definition); Departmental spending is total public sector current expenditure in Resource Departmental Expenditure Limits (OBR definition).

6 Crawford, R Emmerson, C, Keynes, S and Tetlow, G How do the parties' fiscal targets compare? Institute of Fiscal Studies 19 September 2014.

London Councils' modelling suggests that if current policy/funding arrangements/demand stays the same, London local government will face a financial pressure of at least £3.4 billion by 2019/20. By 2020, the statutory responsibilities of social care and waste could require over two-thirds of all available resources.

As part of this financial assessment, London Councils has modelled the projected demand on specific parts of local authority budgets up until 2020. This analysis suggests that demand on children's social care will continue to rise. London's growing population is a significant part of this projected demand. From 2010/11 to 2013/14, the numbers of children in London increased by more than 60,000 (3 per cent) which could result in an increase in demand for children's social care. During this same period, budgeted expenditure on children's social care decreased by 3.5 per cent across London.

By seeking to tackle underlying problems in families, the Troubled Families Programme is reducing the need for reactive services, for example, police call outs, court cases or evictions. For example, one of the significant identified savings evidenced through this new model of work has been around the support it can provide to help prevent children needing to be 'looked after' by the local authority, or by work which results in a child's name being removed from the Child Protection Register, lessening the requirement for social care resources in families that get back on track through the intensive intervention<sup>7</sup>. The expanded Programme has the potential to reduce demand even further. The integrated nature of delivering the Troubled Families Programme can create further cost savings. By services and organisation working well together, costs can be lowered as services are not duplicated.



<sup>7</sup> Barnet's work with troubled families- Statement June 2012  
[http://www.barnet.gov.uk/WorkingWithChildrenInBarnet/download/downloads/id/801/barnets\\_work\\_with\\_troubled\\_families-\\_statement\\_june\\_2012](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/WorkingWithChildrenInBarnet/download/downloads/id/801/barnets_work_with_troubled_families-_statement_june_2012) [http://www.barnet.gov.uk/WorkingWithChildrenInBarnet/download/downloads/id/801/barnets\\_work\\_with\\_troubled\\_families-\\_statement\\_june\\_2012](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/WorkingWithChildrenInBarnet/download/downloads/id/801/barnets_work_with_troubled_families-_statement_june_2012)

# 3. Key Elements of the Programme

The experience of the Troubled Families Programme in London, suggests that success rests on the strong foundations of central and local government working together in a joined-up and complementary manner.

## Central government's contribution

Central government has taken an enabling approach to the programme, setting out a broad framework, without being too prescriptive in how it is delivered locally. This has included providing strong and visible national leadership to make the case for the Programme within government and across the public sector.

### Joined-up investment in local delivery

Central funding for the programme was £448 million for the first phase, with six departments making contributions to a pooled budget. These are the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department of Health, the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Education and the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The government funding is generally 40 per cent of the programme's cost with the remaining 60 per cent funded locally from existing budgets.

This pooling of departmental budgets recognised that the outcomes and benefits of the Programme went beyond one government department and that outcomes were best achieved through investing in local delivery.

### Civil Service support

Delivery of the programme at a local level has been guided by on-going support from staff within the Troubled Families team within the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

For example, the team:

- published a 'What Works' guide to evidence and good practice to inform council's decisions about the interventions needed
- published a report on 'The Costs of Troubled Families' to showcase the cost benefit analysis of leading councils and help other areas make the fiscal case for service transformation
- provided direct support and challenge to areas through a dedicated 'areas team'.

### Identifying and finding solutions for common challenges

While delivery is essentially local, the Troubled Families team has stepped in to develop solutions for common problems that would impede local delivery. For example:

#### *Data Sharing*

Under the current programme, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) created a new legal gateway under the regulations of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. This allowed the DWP to share data with local authorities – without informed consent – for the sole purpose of identifying troubled families. This was not previously allowed and was a barrier to the identification of adults who were on out of work benefits.

In the expanded programme there will be a real need for greater collaboration and sharing of data between local troubled families teams and health bodies. The Troubled Families team has recognised that, given the particular sensitivities around the sharing of personal health data, thought needs to be given to how they can facilitate this at a local level. As such they are already working with Public Health England, Department of Health and NHS England to agree an approach that allows families to be identified for support under the expanded Programme on the basis of their health needs.

### *Development of the Cost-Calculator to be able demonstrate impact*

Demonstrating the financial impact of the programme is crucial in terms of its credibility within central government, local government leadership and local partners. Historically, local cost benefit analysis has been stymied by lack of consensus on unit costs. To help local areas calculate and understand the impact of the programme the Troubled Families team have provided all local authorities with a new online cost savings calculator. This includes unit costs information approved by HM Treasury and other government departments.

### *Drawing in Additional Resources*

When it became evident that additional support was required to achieve employment outcomes the Troubled Families Unit negotiated and developed a new delivery agreement with the Department of Work and Pensions, including a new network of 150 Troubled Families Employment Advisors due to be increased to 300 advisors from April 2015

### Lessons for future public service integration

- Strong and constructive national political commitment is essential
- Pooling central government budgets works
- Trusting in local delivery delivers results
- Strong and constructive Civil Service support is essential
- strong local political leadership is essential.

### Local government implementation

Outside of the overall framework of the programme, councils have had the freedom to develop their own locally tailored models to deliver the programme. This approach recognises that local authorities are uniquely placed to:

- understand their local communities
- work with and bring together local public services
- build partnerships with the community and voluntary sector, which often has the specialist knowledge to support those who have complex problems

Looking at how the programme is being delivered across London, it quickly becomes clear that there are key principles and common features present in all successful local programmes:

The principal characteristic is a **whole family approach**, looking at a family as a whole rather than responding to each problem, or person, separately. This includes looking at the dynamics between family members. For example, understanding how a child's school attendance or offending behaviour may be influenced by a parent's mental health or substance misuse.

Work with the family is through a **key worker**, a pivotal role in the delivery of the Programme. A named key worker is given the role of developing a relationship with the family and providing support. They will also take a persistent, assertive and challenging approach with families where necessary. They get to grips with the family's problems, and work intensively with them to change their lives for the better for the long term. They are also responsible for helping the family navigate the 'system' and work with other professionals to coordinate the multi-agency work with a family.

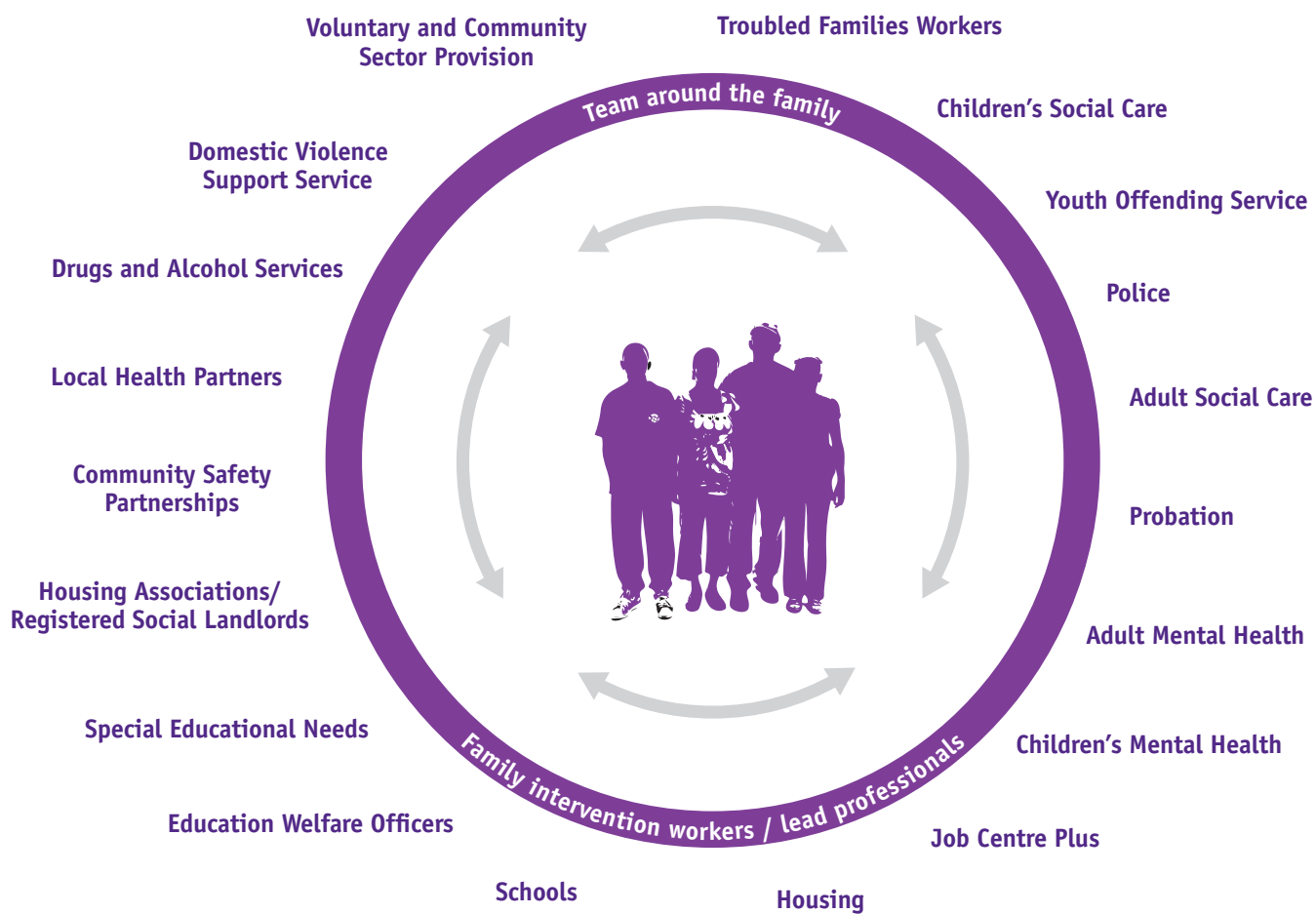
Delivery is **flexible** with interventions in venues appropriate for the family, including in the home, often outside traditional working hours. Key workers also give practical hands-on support such as working with a parent to establish routines like proper meals and bed times.

Local authorities are taking a **multi-agency approach** by joining up agencies at a strategic and operational level.

At a strategic level this means **multi-agency oversight** and grip on the programme (this usually takes the form of a local governance arrangement with senior representatives from the agencies involved).

At an operational level this means taking a **team around the family** approach. While one key worker will 'grip' the family, troubled families teams in boroughs consist of a **co-located** range of professionals who all bring their skills, knowledge and expertise to working with families. Crucially these professionals also have reach back into their own organisations, and are therefore able to draw in **specialist services** at the right time for the family. This also means that when a family is engaged with the programme there is an agreed multi-agency plan for the family which all partners agree on. This has been characterised as "one family, one worker and one plan". Working in this way enables the delivery of the right services and the right interventions at the right time in a family's journey and avoids duplication. Sequencing support also reduces the risk of failed interventions which waste resources and erodes the trust and buy-in of the family.

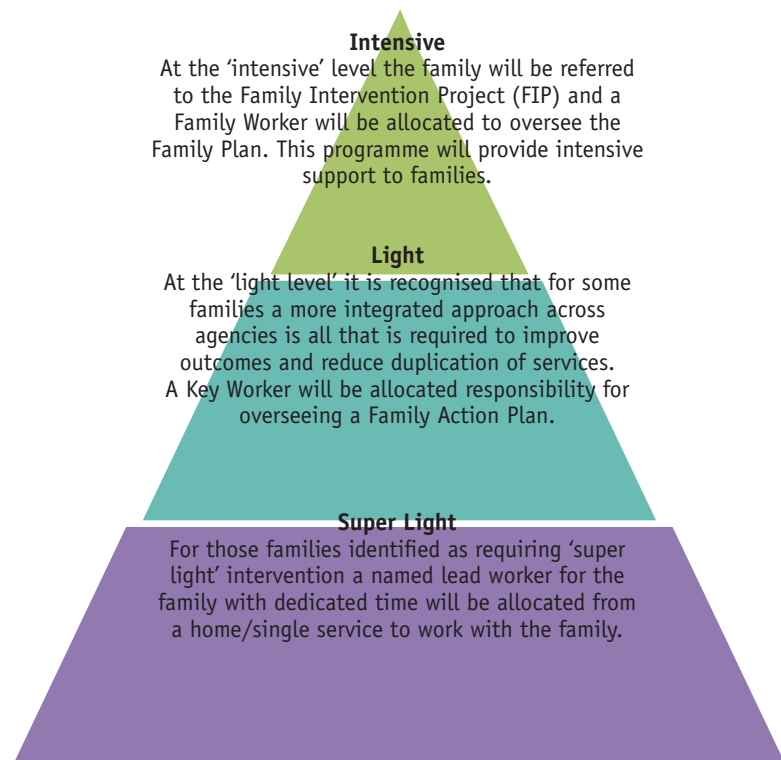
## 'Wraparound' services in practice



**Varying tiers of intervention** - Not every family which can be defined as 'troubled' will have the same level of need. Following the identification or referral of a troubled family there will be a general assessment of a family's circumstances to understand what level of support they might need to turn their lives around. Generally there are three 'tiers of intervention'. DCLG call these 'super light', 'light' and 'intensive' (although it should be noted that local areas often have different names for these tiers).

At the intensive level of intervention, key workers hold small caseloads. This means that workers have time to develop relationships and build trust with families.

*The Troubled Families Programme doesn't replace the statutory responsibilities of the agencies involved in the delivery of the programme, in particular the responsibility of children's social care with regards to safeguarding. Social workers retain the duty to make Child Protection Plans for children who are at risk of significant harm and in these circumstances are also responsible for leading on developing a plan in conjunction with other key agencies. It is for this reason that children's social care are important within the delivery of the Programme, which seeks not to duplicate efforts but enhance support available to children and families.*





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## Case studies

In the remainder of this chapter we explore a number of case studies that give examples of innovative and successful programmes that have been developed locally.

### Wandsworth

Delivery of the Troubled Families Programme in Wandsworth is built on the Family Recovery Project (FRP), which was established as part of the 'community budget' pilot in October 2010. Within the Troubled Families context the FRP is how Wandsworth delivers the intensive tier of intervention. It is integrated and highly targeted and focuses on the most problematic families, including those at risk of losing their children, liberty or home. Wandsworth's families team consists of eight outreach workers, two data analysts, two police officers, a psychologist, a mental health worker, a domestic violence worker, health visitors, an adults substance misuse officer, a community nurse and a housing officer.

By having all these professionals located together, a team can be built around the family tailored to that family's specific needs. Indeed, a large part of the work of the outreach officer – who acts as the first and main point of contact with a family – is around 'de-mystifying' the work of the professionals in the team. For example, getting an individual to accept that being visited by an adult mental health professional doesn't mean that you are mad, or that meeting with a housing officer doesn't mean you are going to be evicted.

Senior Wandsworth officers responsible for the delivery of the Troubled Families and Families Recovery Project attribute the success of the borough's work to two main factors: co-location of professionals working with families and buy-in from senior management and politicians. Wandsworth's chief executive, Paul Martin, chairs a multi-agency steering group that oversees the work of the team.

In addition, Wandsworth has identified that data sharing is key – consent from families is sought at an early stage as a condition of being engaged with FRP. A data sharing protocol was agreed that allows the team to have a "real-time" picture of each family member. The underlying principle is that multi-agency information sharing and analysis leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the

issues in the family thereby informing better care plans and ultimately more positive outcomes.

Performance information to date shows that Wandsworth approach is seeing real success. Up to August 2014 they have had 'turned around' 454 of the 660 families required by the DCLG, which places Wandsworth among the top performing London boroughs on the national scheme. In recognition of this, DCLG has selected Wandsworth as an early starter for the second phase of the Troubled Families Programme.

#### Lessons for future public service integration

- co-location of professionals
- whole family approach
- buy-in from senior management and politicians
- establishing effective ways to share information

### Waltham Forest

In Waltham Forest, the Troubled Families investment is being used to enhance and transform existing services, as well as bringing in evidenced-based specialist interventions for their most complex families. Waltham Forest has used the funding to change the way services currently work with each other to avoid duplicated efforts and intervene more effectively, preventing these families from becoming dependent on costly interventions that are unsustainable and in some cases ineffective.

Waltham Forest's response to the Troubled Families Programme was to bring together the Youth Offending Service, Educational Welfare Service, Community Safety and Targeted Youth Support in to one divisional area and to transform the skill set of their front line staff and managers, to enable a "whole family" approach to be delivered through these existing staff teams. In preparation for phase 2, the Early Intervention Service has also recently joined the division.

The programme is overseen in Waltham Forest by the Troubled Families Executive Board of key stakeholders, which includes: housing, schools, Job Centre Plus, the youth offending team, the education welfare service, health and social services. They established an information sharing agreement and identified the need, prioritised the investment and spend, and monitored the outcomes.

In designing their local programme, Waltham Forest has invested in changing systems to help identify need and strip out duplication, below are some examples of the work that the programme has supported:

- three Restorative Intervention Officers, working in schools to prevent exclusions
- a Functional Family Therapy Team, working with intensive and complex families
- an Employment Support Officer, based in the Children's Centres to support parents back into work
- housing staff trained in Working with Complex Families - City and Guilds Level 4, to build capacity around addressing anti-social behaviour with families
- A Domestic Violence Perpetrators programme.

The Functional Family Therapy Team in particular is an innovative approach to working with families. Functional Family Therapy is based on a number of proven theories of child development and therapeutic practice, including family systems theory, social learning theory, ecological theory, cognitive behavioural principles and effective communication. A key feature of the programme is the therapist's ability to match evidence-based strategies to the specific needs of each family.

Performance information to date shows that Waltham Forest approach is seeing real success. Up to August 2014 they had 'turned around' 428 of the 760 required by DCLG.

#### Lessons for future public service integration

- enhance and transform existing services so that they are people not agency focused
- develop and train existing workforce in new skill sets
- focus on evidence-based interventions
- support innovation.

#### Barnet

In early 2012, the Family Focus model was set up in order to extend and broaden the service to troubled families.

The Family Focus team has developed its work with the most troubled, high risk families, including those already involved with social care on child protection issues, and sometimes with families who have disengaged entirely from services offered.

To complement this work, the Family Focus team has developed services around early intervention support for troubled families who require less intensive support but may nevertheless have multiple problems including domestic violence, mental health issues or school attendance concerns.

This early intervention includes parenting programmes to develop parents' strategies and skills for managing behaviour and for improving communication and relationships with the family, and the role of coordinating other agencies involved.

Individuals in the Family Focus team have been recruited from a wide range of professional backgrounds including education support, social care, special educational needs, drugs/alcohol services, parenting practitioners, youth offending, anti-social behaviour teams, youth work, counselling, domestic violence services and housing. This broad experience allows for a creating sharing of skills, knowledge and expertise in the team.

Barnet has a strategic multi-agency partnership group which oversees the delivery of the programme in Barnet. It is comprised of agencies all of whom regularly deal with the consequences of the action of troubled families and who have both a strategic and financial investment in the programme. Performance information to date shows that Barnet's approach is seeing real success. Up to August 2014, they had turned around 549 of the 705 required by the DCLG, which places Barnet amongst the top performing London borough's on the national scheme. In recognition of this, DCLG has selected Barnet as an early starter for the second phase of the Troubled Families Programme.

#### Lessons for future public service integration

- varying levels of intervention along a continuum of need from intensive to early help
- engagement of key agencies
- multi-agency oversight
- varied background of workforce - wide range of professional backgrounds allows for a creating sharing of skills, knowledge and expertise.

## Family profile

The *Understanding Troubled Families* report published in July 2014, two years into the programme, revealed that on average **nine serious problems** exist in any one family at one time. The report, based on Family Monitoring Data, provided further insight into the families that are being worked with through the current programme, it shows that nationally:

- Families have on average 2.5 children compared to 1.7 children within the general population

- 40 per cent of families had three or more children compared to 16 per cent within the general population
- 49 per cent are lone parent households, compared to 16 per cent within the general population
- 25 per cent have children under five years-old.

**Among the key findings from the report were that on entry to the Programme, that the sample of troubled families had the following characteristics:**



Similarly, 62 per cent of families experiencing domestic violence had a truanting child, compared to 54 per cent where there was no domestic violence and 39 per cent of families experiencing domestic violence also had a young offender, compared to 31 per cent where there was no domestic violence.

60 per cent of families experiencing domestic violence included an adult with a mental health problem compared with 40 per cent in families where there was no domestic violence.

41 per cent of families where there was domestic violence included a child with a mental health problem compared with 28 per cent without a domestic violence problem.

## 4. Good Practice on the Ground: Case Studies of Individual Troubled Families work from across London

The approach used by councils in delivering the programme so far is showing real promise in tackling some of the most entrenched social issues.

Performance figures are published by the Department for Communities and Local Government approximately every quarter and are based on returns submitted by local authorities<sup>8</sup>. The latest round of figures were published in October 2014 and showed that in London 11,521 of the 21,488 total estimated families have had their lives changed positively in line with the programme's expectations.

The performance figures tell part of the story however they only show the narrow definition of Payment by Result outcomes – whether all children in a family are attending school, whether anti-social behaviour and youth offending has significantly reduced, whether adults are back into work. What figures never truly illustrate is the severity of the problems the families engaged in the Programme had and the real progress they have made.

In the remainder of this chapter we tell the stories of five families who have been helped by the Programme in London.

At this stage in the programme, we don't yet have evidence of the sustainability of the change. However, the following case studies attempt to give a fuller picture of the issues facing the families involved in the programme across London, what work/interventions the teams within local authorities took with the family and the positive outcomes for the families.

The case studies have been anonymised but they are the stories of real families in London.

### Family 1

**Father** (age 30) **Mother** (age 29) **Son** (age 7)  
**Daughter** (age 5) (parents no longer together due to Domestic Violence)

#### History before engagement

- Family living in council tenancy: he was the tenant and wife and son were authorised occupants.
- Family in rent and council tax arrears (although not claiming any benefits).

- Daughter was not in education as she was staying with an aunt overseas due to fear of domestic violence. Mother wanted her daughter to return from her aunt's to the family home, but was fearful about domestic violence. Mother would take her son to stay at a friend's house every weekend as a result of the frequent domestic violence.
- Father would often be under the influence of alcohol and would take the son out into the community at unreasonable times and places.
- Son was often brought home by the police.
- Mother approached social services for help, they signposted her to housing options, mother contacted a DV charity for support. Refuge Temporary accommodation was offered two boroughs away and unsuitable for school run.
- Mother often felt low mood and suicidal tendencies as a result of the situation.
- Mother continued to remain in the family home with husband and son but changed her job hours in order to try and avoid her husband.
- Son had poor attendance and was attending a school that was not local. School had concerns over son's behaviour as he was presenting behaviour that was unacceptable such as hitting and kicking.

#### Support given

Key worker contact and support was of a regular frequency with mother and son. This had to be managed carefully as the father was unaware that Mother was seeking support.

The keyworker established an effective action plan with mother. Coordinated approach was taken involving the assessment and referral social worker, DV charity worker and the school.

This included support from the local housing team for mother to access temporary accommodation in the short term. In the longer term mother was supported to challenge the tenancy that her husband occupied as he was in breach of his tenancy due to the domestic violence.

Mother was supported to access housing benefit and council tax support, child benefit and child tax credit benefit.

Mother was also supported to access mental health services to discuss low mood and suicidal feelings.

As a result of the involvement in the programme:

- Daughter returned to the UK to be reunited with mother and brother.
- Mother and children no longer at risk of homelessness as they secured the tenancy.
- Sanctuary scheme secured the property to ensure that it was safe for the mother and children.
- Non molestation order in place to ensure that the father cannot come to the family home or near the mother.
- Children supported to enrol and attend in a local school attendance currently 97 per cent.
- Mother working and engaging in adult learning service and mother no longer has suicidal tendencies.
- Mother and children feel more comfortable and confident and have developed social links with a church and made friends.

## Family 2

**Father** (age 39), **Mother** (age 35), **Daughter** (age 10 months). Parents not together but co-parenting daughter.

### History before engagement

- Both parents have had chaotic pasts with long periods of time spent in custody.
- Father still on licence until July 2014 in relation to drug offences.
- Both parents have convictions relating to drugs. Father has ABH, theft and burglary.
- Mother received intentionally homeless decision as a result of being recalled to custody due to an unlawful address. Mother and daughter therefore living in temporary accommodation with eviction date approaching. Mother at risk of social isolation as limited peers or family around.
- Incidence of domestic violence during pregnancy. Parents separated after the domestic incident. Father engaging with probation as a result.
- Child Protection Plan in place for daughter.
- Both mother and father claiming out of work benefits.
- Lack of effective communication between parents.
- Respect and boundaries issues.

### Support given

The key worker liaised with the other professionals involved with the family including a social worker, a probation officer and a health visitor to ensure correct and coherent support was provided. The key

worker challenged the family on boundaries, feelings and respect.

Practical support was given to family around housing advice. Given the current circumstances the family was signposted towards a housing solicitor and provided continued support with regards to private rented properties. Key worker supported mother to engage with victim awareness programmes and father engage with probation sessions.

Mother and daughter supported to attend play centres and parent groups to promote confidence and social experiences.

As a result of the involvement in the programme:

- Both parents have completed Domestic Violence programme. Father is continuing to engage with probation and has no further crime or anti-social behaviour reported.
- More effective communication leading to better joint parenting techniques. Continued talks about relationship boundaries and trust and respect.
- Daughter developing well and health visitor happy. Child protection plan reduced, now a Child in Need case.
- Mother and daughter supported to access 'Eat Sleep Learn Play' grant, in order to gain essential items such as push chair, cot bed and safety items.
- Father in full-time employment.
- Mother engaging with regular parent groups and making new friends at play centres.
- Ongoing housing support as case being dealt with in court
- Mother is more confident and appears to be happier as their situation progresses.

## Family 3

**Mother** (age 52), **son** (age 14), **mother's adult sister**.

### History before engagement

- Mother assumed responsibility of the care of her sister with schizophrenia from her elderly parents some two years ago. She believed that her carer role meant that she could not seek any form of employment.
- Son's school attendance dipped to 83 per cent caused by a combination of fixed term exclusions and truancy. Son's school behaviour dipped due to his reaction to teasing about his 'poverty'. He was

fixed term excluded on three separate occasions for fighting with peers and started truanting with older boys.

- The household was affected by the benefit cap and got out of depth with illegal loan sharks. Mother had borrowed the last three months' rent money from her elderly parents.

#### **Support given**

Mother attended a Prepare for Work seminar in a local community setting. The seminar had been targeted at families that had been identified as reluctant to engage and not responding to targeted home visits. Mother started as quite defensive about the prospect of preparing for work – using her caring responsibilities as a reason. She was counselled by the Department for Work and Pensions Employment Adviser and agreed to participate with the Better Off In Work Calculator exercise. This task demonstrated that the family would be better off by £200+ per month if mother secured a minimum of 16 hours work per week, even at minimum wage. She started an I.T. basic programme at the local college while her sister received respite care. On the back of this, mother has secured a part time post at the newly rebuilt Terminal Two. Her sister is cared for by a local third sector organisation. In order to achieve sustained progress a finance plan has been created for the family by the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Son was offered a six week 'Reflect and Refresh' programme through the Pupil Referral Unit, commissioned by the school and brokered by the key worker. He participated in a 'boys' groups' designed to boost his self-esteem. He also engaged in a Thinking Skills programme. He returned to school at the completion of this programme.

As a result of the involvement in the programme:

- Mother has secured and maintained a part time retail job
- The family finances have stabilised
- Son has not been excluded from school and his attendance has improved to 92 per cent
- The carer has recommended a medication review for mother's sister which may support an improvement in her condition.

While the intensive stage of intervention has been completed, the son continues to receive support through the allocation of a mentor at school so that his progress can be sustained.

### **Family 4**

**Mother** (age 38) and **two sons** (age 16 and 11).

#### **History before engagement**

- Both children were not attending school regularly. Mother was taken to court and was fined £50 for each child and given a Parenting Contract.
- Children were missing health and dental appointments and there were concerns around son 1's lack of teeth.
- Social Services had been involved with the family for a number of years intermittently and had been subject to a Child Protection Plan previously but with support was then able to de-escalate to Child in Need and then closure. The case then reopened in the summer 2013 with similar concerns, which resulted in both boys being made subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- The living environment was dirty and cluttered.
- Mother had been in an abusive and violent relationship a number of years ago and appeared to be unable to move on from this even though she had no contact with the boy's father.
- Lack of routines and structure within the home and mother was struggling to assert any authority over her two boys.

#### **Support given**

A whole family approach was taken with the family. This process enabled the worker in partnership with family and social care to develop a robust plan which addressed key concerns and resulted in positive changes being made.

The interventions comprised the worker spending time with the family observing what routines were in place. This helped with the children's school attendance and at one point it had gone up to 100 per cent for a whole term. The worker also focused on Mum's parenting and encouraged her to set boundaries with the children looking at what she already does, what she has previously tried before and then trying out some new things with the worker supporting her along the way.

Practical support was also put in place with the key worker taking the children to school with mother,



helping to de-clutter the home as well as taking mother to an interview to start a 12 week Domestic Violence course and waiting outside during the interview. Mother become more open to asking for help including seeking advice and support to get back into the workplace

As a result of the involvement in the programme:

- Morning and evening routine established and implemented.
- Son 2's school attendance is now at 89 per cent and Son 1 is 90 per cent. No further fines have been issued for non-attendance.
- Son 1 is now on a Child in Need Plan.
- The home is in a much better condition.
- Mother has started to ask for help, no longer lies for her boys and is a lot more open with professionals.
- Son 1 will be starting college in September. He completed his GCSE's and had been predicted A-C Grades.
- Son 2 completed his SAT's and achieved high grades in all subjects
- Both boys attend the dentist regularly - son 1 attends each week due to the amount of work that is needed to be done. Mother is making sure all appointments are outside school hours.
- Mother is now volunteering twice a week as well as securing a job in a school as a lunch-time supervisor.
- Mother is open to support and has started to show that she can make sustainable changes.
- Each family member receives individual specialised help in regards to the Domestic Violence they experienced.

## Family 5

**Mother**(age 46), **father**, (age 51), **son and daughter**, 15 1/2 (twins). **Eldest daughter** not living in property has an 8 month daughter.

### History before engagement

- Family were known to the local Early Intervention Service due to a referral being made as a result of police attending the family home, following an argument between son and his parents.
- Son left the family home and travelled around on a night bus.
- Both children had attendance and punctuality problems.

- Domestic violence known to have been perpetrated in the home.
- Son's behaviour was of concern at school and within the family home. He displayed challenging behaviour and was permanently excluded from school when FIP took on the case. He had been known to have frequent angry outbursts and was violent at times.
- Mother not working and there was a lack of routines.
- Father's health has deteriorated over the years and is continuing to do so.
- The family was in rent and council tax arrears.

### Support given

A whole family approach was taken with the family. This enabled the worker to address parenting practices as well as exploring mum and dads background. As result, they found areas where their own childhood experiences were affecting the way in which they were parenting. Parents were helped to change areas of their parenting styles which were not helping to encourage positive behaviour amongst her children, especially their son.

The family were in rent and council tax arrears and were at risk of being evicted. Both parents were unable to understand the letters and respond appropriately. The key worker gripped this situation going through financial paperwork and establishing a plan to pay back the arrears. While looking for employment, mum was supported to complete a three week course, which was Level 1 Customer Service in Retail.

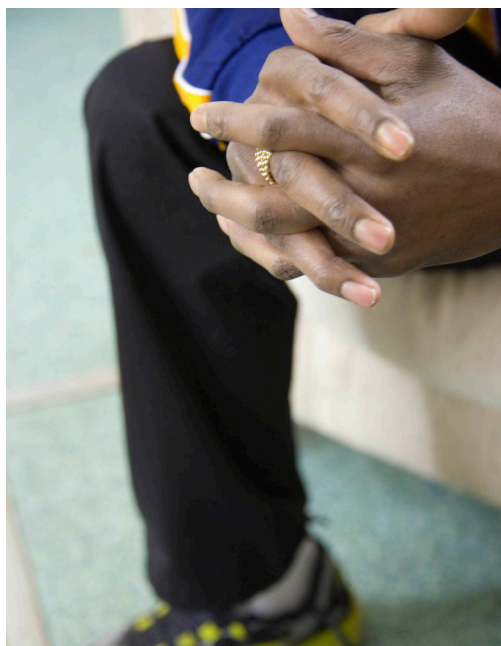
Due to the father's disability he was unable to remove debris that had built up over the years from the garden. The key worker arranged for the debris to be removed allowing a garden to be enjoyed and safely utilised by the family.

Eldest daughter was assisted in moving from a mother and baby unit to a YMCA shelter. This was a result of her partner suffering mental health issues which in turn had put her and her 8 month-old baby daughter at risk. She will now be nearer her family and this site has 24 hour security. Her partner is also banned from visiting the property.

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As a result of the involvement in the Programme:

- Their son is currently receiving home tuition and will be attending college in September.
- Mother no longer colludes in/justifies her children's negative behaviour.
- Family are no longer at risk of losing their home due to rent and council tax arrears.
- Mother now has certification in Level 2 Customer Service in Retail, which increases her chances of employment.
- She is also actively looking for employment with the support of her husband and children
- Arguments between parents and son have reduced considerably as his conduct in the house is more positive e.g. coming home on time, offering to wash the dishes
- Daughter has remained in mainstream education and is studying for her GCSEs.
- Daughter is actively looking for a summer/weekend job.
- Father has agreed to apply for Disability Living Allowance, which will help to increase the family financial situation. He is entitled, however he was previously unwillingly to be registered as disabled.
- Family have redecorated areas of their home and now have a clear garden.
- Eldest daughter moved to high security accommodation, to safeguard herself and baby daughter.



# 5. Lessons From the First Phase



There is a great deal that can be learnt from the first phase of the programme. Understanding critical success factors as well as the challenges will be crucial both in terms of informing the design and delivery of the expanded programme and for public service reform more generally. The lessons identified in previous chapters and case studies are summarised below.

## Critical success factors

Chapter 3 explored the design and innovation of the programme. Below is a summary of the critical success factors for the programme and in particular what should be considered when developing integrated services more generally.

**Personalised, 'wraparound' interventions** - The nature of complex dependency necessitates personalised, intensive interventions that are highly tailored to the recipients' individual circumstances. This is an inherently local approach that will often see key workers working with an individual or family throughout the entirety of the intervention and prevents 'cold' referrals to services that could see people fall through the cracks between services.

**Importance of the Key Worker** - The role is pivotal in providing challenge and support to families. Key Workers develop a relationship with the family and provide support. However they also take a persistent, assertive and challenging approach with families. They are there to get to grips with the family's problems, and work intensively with them to change their lives for the better for the long term. They are also responsible for helping the family navigate the 'system' and work with other professionals to coordinate the multi-agency work with a family.

**Multi-Agency working/co-location** - It is the multi-agency approach that allows all aspects of an individual or family's needs to be taken account of as a whole. Having local agencies working together in close proximity also allows them to react nimbly and devise pragmatic solutions or 'workarounds' to the barriers they encounter.

**Strong relationships** - Good relationships between local agencies are a feature of high-performing local public services. The Troubled Families multi-agencies team have been made possible thanks to the strong relationships that exist between partners at the local level.

**Commitment and leadership** - Strong local relationships are reinforced by buy in from senior management. This ensures that commitment cascades down through an organisation and also that links to other local organisations can quickly be made. Strong local political leadership is also a critical element of success.

**Data sharing** - Getting the right data sharing arrangement in place is critical for the integrated programmes to be successful. In the case of Troubled Families multi-agency information sharing and analysis leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the issues in the family thereby informing better care plans and ultimately more positive outcomes.

## Partnership Engagement Case Studies

### Working with Housing Associations –Tower Hamlets Family Intervention Project and Southern Housing Group

Southern Housing Group (SHG) funds a team of Family Support Workers to work with SHG residents in Central and East London. The project is managed by Tower Hamlets Council Family Intervention Project (FIP) and is part of the wider programme. The project comprises of two Family Support Workers who liaise closely with frontline SHG staff to identify and engage with SHG residents in need of FIP support. The FIP workers receive referrals from a range of SHG staff including Income Recovery Officers, Anti-Social Behaviour Officers, Housing Officers, Housing Managers and Lettings Officers. Support Workers also work closely with SHG staff to provide joined up support to families, and in particular liaise with SHG Financial Skills Officers and Employment Skills Officers to provide support.

The partnership has supported scores of SHG households to save their tenancies, and has supported individuals within these households to address personal and family problems. Many of the clients who have engaged, have also accessed paid employment thanks to the support received from their FIP worker and specialist SHG support staff.

The main reasons behind the project's success to date:

- **Reach:** As a social landlord, SHG has a unique level of access to the types of clients the FIP service is aimed at.
- **Additional services:** Like many large social landlords, SHG has a range of support services beyond housing management for the benefit of residents. These include employment and training, financial inclusion, digital inclusion and a range of other services.
- **Joint working:** The FIP service is integrated into SHG staff teams. They sit in SHG offices and speak to SHG staff every day. They have access to our management information systems and share data with SHG staff.

### Working with the Probation Service – Haringey

Haringey has taken an innovative approach to engaging local partners using their Payment by Results payments. Haringey created a system whereby this funding is reinvested with partner organisations who provide a business case explaining how they would work with their mainstream staff to enable them to be a lead professional for a family where appropriate and most importantly to ensure interventions are co-ordinated around the whole family. The person undertaking this role is an experienced Probation Officer and has also worked within children and family services.

Haringey has done this now with the Youth Offending Service, and most recently with Probation. Through this progress, Haringey has managed to achieve good engagement with their local probation colleagues from both the National Probation Service and the London Community Rehabilitation Service. Senior probation officers regularly attend Haringey's Families First (the local name for the Troubled Families Programme) Steering Group and actively engage with the process.

Feedback from the CRC ACO:

*"The London CRC currently supervises 913 offenders in the community in Haringey of which 1.9 per cent are recorded as have child protection concerns and a further 8.7 per cent are recorded as being domestic violence perpetrators, an offence which has a direct impact on the children in the home."*

By working together with the practitioner from Families First, the London CRC for Haringey will be able to identify a cohort of service users with whom we can work to put a wraparound range of services to reduce the risk of harm to children and increase the opportunities for these service users and their families to escape from the cycle of unemployment and dependency on benefits. By having a practitioner working directly in a probation office with access to our case records, they will be uniquely placed to identify those who are most at risk and who would benefit most from the services on offer."

**The following two case studies give examples of where key worker's collaboration with partners was crucial in achieving successful outcomes for families:**

#### **School**

"By liaising with the child's school, I was able to view academic reports for the young person I was working with, which highlighted his good academic ability, while gaining a level of partnership with them to support the young person. By working in partnership with the school and identifying the young person's wishes for life after school, we were able to structure an alternative timetable that kept him engaged, that motivated him towards small goals to complete his final months of school and prepare and secure a college placement. This young person went on to: improve his attendance, sit his exams, gain a college placement, gain a positive prospect about his future and became more motivated towards taking ownership over his life choices."

#### **Health**

"Mum was on prescribed pain medication from her GP for back and hip (morphine), sleeping tablets and anti-depression. Further to this, mum was a cocaine user. On building a relationship with mother it became quite apparent from observations and discussion that she was self-medicating alongside her prescribed medications.

Due to the impact that this was having on her parenting ability and her avoidant behaviour towards her drug dependency, I felt that I need to consult with mother's GP.

I contacted the GP service and it was established that mother had not attended her last review appointment and had not attended her pain management appoint at the hospital. The GP had tried to reduce sleeping tablets but mum had resisted this. The GP therefore had agreed to keep her on same dosage. It was agreed that a review of her medication needs was to be a priority and that a referral needed to be made to the pain management team at the hospital.

As a result of this action, mum's medication has been changed and monitored closely by GP. Further to this, mum was supported in informing her own mother of her addiction. This led to mum's mother helping with her daily prescribed medication intake this, in turn, stops her self-medicating."

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## Challenges

### Flexibility

When launching the programme, the Prime Minister committed to turning around the lives of 120,000 troubled families by the end of the parliament. As part of the programme each local area was given an estimate of their number of troubled families. Areas were expected to turn around 100 per cent of the estimated numbers of families within the life of the programme.

Experience suggests that you are unlikely to achieve success with every person with complex problems that you work with. For that reason local areas were advised to work with more families than their estimated number.

However some boroughs - particularly, though not exclusively, in central London - have found it extremely difficult to identify additional families who meet the narrow phase 1 national criteria. Changing demographics and movement of families within London is evident. A combination of national policy i.e. welfare reforms, continued austerity and local circumstances like soaring rental markets, has significantly impacted on where people are living in London over the past four years.

These boroughs will find it extremely difficult to have turned around all of the number of families allocated to them by May 2014 which will affect their ability to take part in the expanded programme.

In addition, these demographic changes are on-going in London; a fact partly reflected in the more flexible expanded programme criteria. However the Department for Communities and Local Government should continue to build flexibility into the expanded programme, particularly with regards to setting local targets.

### Achieving employment outcomes

One of the biggest challenges of the first phase of the programme has been achieving employment outcomes.

Employment support in the first phase is delivered across London through the ESF Families with Multiple Problems Programme which was commissioned nationally by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The latest official statistics (released January 2014) show that since the start of the programme in January 2012 the programme had achieved 290 job outcomes in London from 3,980 attachments (a performance rate of 7.5 per cent).

This programme has underperformed in part due to a lack of integration with the multi-agency team around the family.

Achieving alignment between the ESF Families and the Troubled Families Programme was not helped by the two programmes being designed separately. The Public Accounts Committee in its report on the two programmes found that

*“The two programmes were designed without joint governance arrangements and had separate business cases. The absence of integration during the design phase led to confusion amongst those delivering the programmes and contributed to the low levels of performance for DWP’s programme”<sup>10</sup>*

Achieving employment outcomes will remain a critical part of the Troubled Families Programme and in August 2014 the DWP announced that they were committed to continuing to resource JobCentre Plus’s Troubled Families advisors. This includes the intention that every area will have access to at least one advisor.

However, with the ESF Families programme due to come to an end in March 2015 it is critical that a new round of support is commissioned to provide employment support for the Troubled Families Programme. To that end, London Councils is currently working with the London Enterprise Panel to develop a families strand of the 2014 – 2020 Adult ESF panel in London to help support delivery of the employment outcomes of the expanded Troubled Families Programme.

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9 [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/295565/esf-families-provision-jan-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/295565/esf-families-provision-jan-2014.pdf)

10 Public Accounts Committee Fifty-First Report: Programmes to help families facing multiple challenges  
24 March 2014



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### Engaging local partners

In the first phase of the programme, some local partners have been more willing to engage with the programme than others. Schools (particularly academies), the Probation Service, Housing Associations and Registered Social Landlords and mental health services are all agencies where boroughs have reported having difficulty engaging. It should be made clear that the picture on engagement is variable across different boroughs and there are many examples of these services engaging well in boroughs across London.

Moving forward, government departments need to be proactive in encouraging their agencies to engage with the programme. In return local areas need to be able to demonstrate and evidence the value and impact of the programme to secure partner buy-in.

Co-location and multi-agency working can, at times, be undermined by conflicting, often centrally determined, targets and performance frameworks, workforce cultures, or HR practices of parent organisations.

### Data sharing

Data sharing is another common barrier that boroughs have experienced in developing their programmes. Having a full picture of a family's circumstances is an essential component of family intervention work. This includes understanding which agencies are already working with a family. While some of this can be uncovered through conversations with the family, the sharing of data between agencies is necessary.

Sometimes explicit rules forbid the sharing of data; sometimes different agencies draw different interpretations around issues of consent and data sharing guidance. Sometimes differing systems simply do not capture the data needed. While having multi-agency teams working closely together sometimes allows pragmatic solutions to be found to get around such problems, data sharing issues almost always add complexity and time to processes.

Even worse, the inability to capture or track personalised data can act as a major barrier to mapping user journeys and providing the personalised, wraparound support that is so often needed to tackle issues of complex dependency.

In addition, being able to demonstrate the impact of the programme and cost saving to local partners is an essential part of the achieving local sustainability. However incorporating current and timely data from some partner agencies to measure impact is challenging, particularly in relation to data held by health and police.

As the programme expands into areas such as health and families affected by domestic violence and abuse it will become even more important that solutions are found which enable appropriate data sharing amongst professionals, which will require leadership from government departments.

### Financial sustainability

The long-term financial sustainability of the programme is a concern. London boroughs have welcomed the extension of the programme, including the £200 million nationally that is available for its delivery in 2015/16. However the central funding for the programme is typically only 40 per cent of the programme's cost with the remain 60 per cent having to be funded locally from existing budgets – primarily those of the local authority – with ad-hoc contributions being secured from partners. However, if interventions such as these are to become part of mainstream service delivery over a significant period of time, new mechanisms for leveraging in investment will need to be found. Any such mechanism would need to address the fact that while the local authority is often a key player – if not the key player – the benefits of tackling complex dependency would largely fall to partner agencies. Local areas' early cost-benefit analysis seems to be confirming this.

If the multi-agency approach exemplified by the Troubled Families Programme is to be scaled-up and applied to more areas, new funding mechanisms will need to be found that secure contributions from the agencies which benefit from tackling the issues of complex dependency.

Simon Parker of the New Local Government Network articulates this point well in *Within Reach: The New Politics of Multiple Needs and Exclusion*:

*"At present, councils are often asked to make heavy investments in new forms of service provision that primarily save money for other agencies".<sup>11</sup>*

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### **Achieving lasting change**

Sustainable reductions in demand will only occur if the programme has realised its aims of tackling the root cause of presenting issues and thus in changing the way that families behave.

While the programme has produced promising results to date, with families whose lives have changed positively in line with the Programme's expectations we don't yet have evidence base to gauge sustainability of the change.

It is possible that a proportion of the identified cohort will cycle in and out of need in future and may require some support from a range of mainstream local services.

### **Capacity**

Troubled Families teams and Family Intervention Programmes often tap into mainstream services as part of the engagement with the family. However, the financial pressure facing the public sector risks further disinvestment from key services. Services like domestic violence teams; drug and alcohol services, homelessness provision early intervention, community mental health teams, children's mental health and local housing support are already under pressure, with many of them increasing eligibility thresholds. Early intervention work is also likely to come under budgetary pressure.

A particular example is the capacity of local mental health services. Mental health services are underfunded compared to services which address physical ill health. The *Understanding Troubled Families* report highlighted the high prevalence of mental health issues within the families engaged in the programme. In times of tight budgets, mental health services understandably prioritise their limited resources on critical and acute cases, with only those with the most severe illness receiving care. While this situation is understandable, given current funding levels, we know that if we get mental health support right, particularly with children and young people, we can in many cases prevent issues becoming entrenched.

# 6. The Future of Family Intervention - The Next Five Years of the Programme

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The first phase of the programme has presented local government a unique opportunity to bring services together to improve outcomes for families and cut costs.

It was announced as part of Spending Review 2013, that the Troubled Families Programme would be expanded to work with 400,000 more families from 2015 to 2020, with £200 million funding for 2015 to 2016<sup>12</sup>. The Budget in March 2014 announced that DCLG would work with high performing areas so that 40,000 of the additional 400,000 families could be worked with early during 2014/15 and that they would provide access to upfront funding to do this<sup>13</sup>.

On the 19 August 2014 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced that 11 of the 51 local authorities who will begin work with up to 40,000 additional families this year are London boroughs. They are:

- Barking and Dagenham
- Barnet
- Bromley
- Greenwich
- Haringey
- Havering
- Lambeth
- Merton
- Redbridge
- Richmond upon Thames
- Wandsworth

The expansion of the Troubled Families Programme is a significant vote of confidence in the ability of local authorities to co-ordinate interventions locally and deliver results.

To be included in the expanded Troubled Families Programme, a family will have to be referred by specialist agencies as having 2 of the 6 following problems:

- parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- children who have not been attending school regularly
- children who need help

- adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness
- families affected by domestic violence and abuse
- parents and children with a range of health problems.

London local authorities have broadly welcomed this evolution of the programme and made the case to the Troubled Families Unit for the scope of the programme to be broadened so that more families can be engaged and intervention and support offered early to prevent complex challenges from deepening. London local authorities were also concerned that the criteria for inclusion on the programme did not necessarily identify those families with the highest levels of need and cost to the public purse. For example, the criteria tended to exclude families with younger children where the rewards of intervening earlier would be significant for both the public purse and the families themselves.

London Councils is pleased to see that DCLG has listened to this advice and that the expanded programme explicitly targets families with vulnerable younger children.

London local authorities and their partners are showing they can learn from, and build on, the success of the first phase. Over the next five years there will be an opportunity for areas to work with more families, continue to improve their assessment of a family's needs and co-ordination of services. There will also be a need for areas to go further in terms of other local authority services aligning with the troubled families approach and for even more public sector agencies to become involved in delivery of the programme. Local government will also be looking to achieve greater joint investment, with partners, in early intervention and prevention to drive down demand and avoid longer term need for reactive, specialist services.

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<sup>12</sup> HM Treasury (June 2013) Spending Round 2013, London, HM Treasury

<sup>13</sup> HM Treasury (March 2014) Budget 2014, London, HM Treasury

## 7. Troubled Families Programme: A Template for Future Service Reform?

The Troubled Families Programme has demonstrated that, if we are to find an effective way tackling the entrenched problems of those trapped by complex dependency, and hence of managing future demand for services, local government needs to take a central role. Local authorities are uniquely placed to:

- understand their local communities
- work with and bring together local public services
- build partnerships with the community and voluntary sector, which often has the specialist knowledge that those who have complex problems need to start turning their lives around.

The Troubled Families Programme offers a useful demonstration of how agencies can work with a broader cohort of families and individuals with complex and multiple issues. By delivering the right services and the right interventions at the right time in a family's journey, local authorities and their partners can start to truly manage 'complex dependency' and reduce later service demand. The programme has shown that this can only be achieved when services are built around the needs of people not agencies<sup>14</sup>.

Achieving greater integration of public services can be particularly effective for those hardest to help. As the case studies in this report demonstrate, it is only when public services work in a coordinated way, that people stop falling through the gaps that the extent and overlapping nature of difficulties are uncovered and entrenched issues are overcome. Service users with multiple needs tend to have difficulty navigating through the system. Integrated services, particularly those with case management, can help service users navigate through the system and get the services they need.

The Troubled Families Programme has demonstrated how central government can successfully work with local government and other agencies to bring budgets and services together in a pro-active way at a local level. The programme has benefited from the trust shown in local government to get on and help turn around the lives of some of the families that place the greatest demand on public services.

One of the innovations for the Troubled Families Programme has been the pooling and devolving of Whitehall Budgets to invest in local delivery. This model recognises that local authorities are often asked to make heavy investments in new forms of service provision that primarily save money for other agencies.

The Public Accounts Committee seems to agree with this assessment. In its "Programmes to help families facing multiple challenges" report it made the following recommendations to government:

"The government should learn lessons from the approach taken in this case to ensure that there is integrated policy making and implementation within, and across departments. The government should agree a clear plan for delivery of the next phase of DCLG's Troubled Families Programme, from 2015."

"DCLG should identify good practice on how central and local agencies work together on its Troubled Families Programme to secure a joined-up approach to local delivery. It should share this widely across the public sector, particularly in areas such as the health and social care sectors, where effective delivery at a local level relies on the coordination of multiple agencies."

For while programmes like Troubled Families are a huge step in the right direction, for local public services to truly be in the right position to meet the pressure of both decreased budgets and increased demand, as highlighted in chapter 2, there needs to be greater devolution of both power and money to local areas. Doing so opens up the opportunity to reconfigure services around people and places, through the creation of place-based pooled budgets.

The London Finance Commission recommended this approach when it called for "Central government [to] extend the remit and scale of Community Budget Pilots through 'single pots' devolved from existing Whitehall budgets."<sup>15</sup>

London Councils has explored specific public policy areas, which exemplify how devolution from Whitehall to local areas could achieve better outcomes and save money.

<sup>14</sup> Public Accounts Committee Fifty-First Report: Programmes to help families facing multiple challenges  
24 March 2014

<sup>15</sup> p61 Raising the capital The report of the London Finance Commission. May 2013

### Welfare to Work:

Despite London's success, there are 465,935 long-term unemployed and economically inactive people in the capital who want to work, this includes:

- **68,515** people who have been claiming JSA for six months or more (Nomis Data at July 2014)
- **58,420** ESA WRAG claimants who have been claiming for six months or more (Nomis Data at Feb 2014) – ('ESA WRAG' refers to people who have been assessed to have a sickness or disability, but are considered well enough to be working/ job searching)
- **339,000** people who are economically inactive (i.e. not claiming a benefit but not working) that have stated that they would like to have a job (from the Annual Population Survey April 2013 – March 2014).

Currently, £8 of every £10 spent on employment support in London is designed and delivered nationally. National schemes are not meeting the needs of Londoners. They cannot address the many specific characteristics of London's job market, or barriers such as high childcare and housing costs.

Local authorities understand the local job market and are able to align work programmes with services such as housing, childcare and mental and physical health services. Already, locally commissioned programmes are outperforming national programmes<sup>16</sup>.

A single funding pot for employment services in London made up of co-commissioned funding (between Department for Work and Pensions and groups of boroughs) and targeted funds devolved to boroughs. The pot would be ring-fenced for employment support but should allow for greater flexibility than national funding streams provide. The single funding pot for employment support should progressively be devolved to London as existing mainstream contracts end. This could move an estimated 34,700 people back to work in a year and result in savings to the state of £230 million<sup>17</sup>.

Central London local authorities are currently developing an ESA pilot that will further demonstrate the benefits of this type of local integration.

### Central London ESA pilot

Central London boroughs are currently working with central government to design a pilot that will demonstrate how integrating services at the local level can better help Londoners with complex needs to find work. The pilot was part of the Growth Deal for London announced in July and marked the culmination of a year of negotiations between London boroughs, the GLA, the LEP and central government.

From April 2015, eight central London boroughs aim to begin working with Employment and Support Allowance claimants who have been unsuccessful at finding work through the Work Programme. The pilot will test whether better outcomes and value for money can be achieved compared to national programmes, by commissioning at scale to deliver interventions tailored to the often complex needs of those claimants. The pilot will adopt a caseworker approach, drawing on a range of local services to support people into work.

Success will unlock a series of progressive steps that will give the whole of London government greater influence over employment support programmes delivered in the capital. Learning from the pilot will also influence the development of any successor to the Work Programme.

### Tackling re-offending:

Crime rates in London have been steadily decreasing over the last decade. In the last financial year reported crime in London fell by 6.2 per cent with 46,000 fewer crimes. Despite this drop there were still nearly 700,000 crimes reported across London<sup>18</sup>. In addition, reoffending rates have remained stubbornly high. In London, latest figures show that the proportion of adults reoffending within 12 months is 32 per cent who go on to commit a further 16,209 offences<sup>19</sup>.

To achieve significant reductions in crime and reoffending, local agencies need to have greater freedom and incentives to work together to create integrated 'wrap around' services for offender. These services offer offenders that are motivated to change support and rehabilitation services and target enforcement on those offenders who continue to commit crime.

16 Harrison, J London Councils (April 2013) Getting London Working. London. London Councils

17 A Growth Deal for London: Proposals to HM government, London Enterprise Panel 31 March 2014

18 <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/period-ending-march-2014/index.html>

19 Ministry of Justice (July 2014) Proven reoffending statistics quarterly bulletin, London, Ministry of Justice

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The main government departments that would benefit from this approach to reducing reoffending are Ministry of Justice, Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Health. Following the Troubled Families model, each of these departments would pool their resources and invest in locally delivered services.

The establishment of a single funding pot for services and support for offenders in London could be achieved through the devolution of some element of the criminal justice budget, as well as other departmental budgets to deliver community based crime prevention and targeted comprehensive rehabilitation for prolific offenders.

Establishing more local financial accountability for the demand placed on criminal justice services, such as courts, prison places and probation services, would, for example, provide them with an incentive to work more effectively to reduce crime and reoffending locally.

This approach would also help manage service demand, by re-investing savings to the public purse into services that intervene earlier. This virtuous circle would lead to long term improved outcomes for individuals, safer communities and less cost to taxpayer.



## Conclusion

The commissioning of services at the national level, as in the example of the Work Programme and community probation services, can act as a major roadblock to integration of services. Nationally commissioned providers are typically under no obligation to engage with local multi-agency teams and build on local practice. This creates a major barrier to providing wraparound support, with unnecessary divisions between services that need to work together more effectively.

As we move towards greater multi-agency working and as local areas are given greater freedom, there may well be opportunities to align and amalgamate a number of multi-agency arrangements through the streamlining of teams and agencies with a focus on reconfiguring delivery through the lens of 'whole system' and a 'whole place'.

The Troubled Families Programme has demonstrated the value of strong cross-government leadership, where departments set a strong expectation that their agencies will support integration at a local level. In the long-term optimal integration will require clarity and security in agencies financial position: Long-term financial settlements for local government, for example, would enable long-term investment in services and pooled budgets with local partners.

The success of the locally-delivered Troubled Families Programme has shown clearly that devolving responsibility and funding for key public services to the local level – where the benefits of integration and personalisation can be realised – can bring services together effectively to both improve outcomes and cut costs. The lessons and success factors drawn out in this report offer a ready template for use in other areas and are particularly suited to tackling complex and long-standing dependency.



London Councils  
59½ Southwark Street  
London SE1 0AL  
[www.londoncouncils.gov.uk](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk)  
020 7934 9813

**design:** [pinsentdesign.com](http://pinsentdesign.com)  
**images:** Photofusion  
**publication date:** November 2014