



SaferMK Partnership Information Report

Subject: Strengthening Families Programme

Report Author:

Lee Westlake, Head of Service Youth Justice, Tel: (01908) 254680

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the Strengthening Families Programme which is Milton Keynes response to the national Troubled Families agenda.
- 1.2 This update was requested at the meeting on 15 March 2015 and is intended to summarise the end of the Phase 1 programme and report on the early stages of Phase 2 (which commenced 1 April 2015).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report and the progress made to date be noted.

3. Comments from the Scrutiny Management Committee

- 3.1 There are no comments or recommendations to report.

4. Background

- 4.1 Previous reports have described the background to Phase 1 of the Troubled Families programme detailing the challenges faced in Milton Keynes and the actions taken to overcome them.
- 4.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government set a target for Milton Keynes to identify and 'turn around' the lives of 425 'troubled families'. By the final claim window in May 2015 we had made successful claims for 401 families (94.5%). The majority of those we could not claim for had not been engaged in the programme long enough to satisfy the counting rules.
- 4.3 Fifteen local authority areas did not achieve 100% turnaround including comparators such as Bedford, Reading and Swindon and large areas such as Birmingham and Essex.

- 4.4 In 2014 the Government announced an expansion of the programme to target an additional 400.000 families over 5 years subject to continued political support. The target for Milton Keynes will be 1510 families. For 2015/16 we were asked to identify and work with 257 families and have received attachment fees of £1000 per family in anticipation that we will reach that target.
- 4.5 We have identified over 260 eligible families so far and obtaining consent to participate in the programme (a requirement for research and evaluation purposes) and the formulation of individual Family Outcomes Plans is now underway.
- 4.6 Work to establish a clear delivery model has been completed and is set out in a comprehensive tool kit available on the programme's web site (www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/strengtheningfamilies). This is being supported by a series of briefings open to all partners scheduled between September and December. (See attached Annex B)
- 4.7 Learning from Phase 1 has led to a clearer explanation of the benefits of participation in the programme set out in refreshed material for staff and service users (see attached Annexes A [(i & ii)]). The Phase 2 programme has more limited funding but investment in additional services is being made especially with respect to parenting/family support and youth crime prevention.
- 4.8 Nationally the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) has also made a significant investment in staffing to support engagement with work and training and we have been allocated 2 full time DWP advisers to work within the programme.
- 4.9 The attached slide provides a reminder of the eligibility criteria and summarises some of the key components of the local delivery model.
- 4.10 A results payment can be claimed by a local authority if it can demonstrate that a family who were eligible for the Troubled Families Programme have either:
1. Achieved significant and sustained progress, compared with all the family's problems; or
 2. An adult in the family has moved off benefits and into continuous employment.

Descriptions and definitions of the outcomes and measures that constitute and demonstrate eligibility and significant and sustained progress are set out in the Milton Keynes **Troubled Family Outcomes Plan** which is on the web site. Further development of the Plan will continue drawing on the experience gained in the first year of Phase 2.

- 4.11 It is anticipated that the first reward claims will be made from July 2016 onwards. When a success claim is accepted the local authority will receive £800 per family. It is likely that some of this will be used to develop an incentives/reward scheme as part of the programmes benefits for participating families.
- 4.12 The data and evaluation requirements for Phase 2 are extensive and the government is supporting the additional burden through a grant of £200,000 per year which will pay for the cost of running the programme.

5. Implications to SaferMK Partnership

- 5.1 Criminal or anti- social activities perpetrated by adults and/or young people are key eligibility criteria for the programme. Turning around the lives of these families including desistance from crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) are congruent with the aims and objectives of the partnership.
- 5.2 Most of the agencies represented at this partnership are involved strategically and operationally with Strengthening Families including nominating families and frequently providing support to individual family members or the family as a whole. Thus the programme can support the achievement of individual agency goals with respect to crime, ASB and community safety.
- 5.3 Consequently ensuring that the Strengthening Families programme is successful will serve the interests of the partnership and its constituent partners and will attract reward funds that can be used to support interventions.
- 5.4 The national Phase 2 programme has a stated intention to promote transformational change in the delivery of services to these often high cost families to reduce the burden on the public purse and deliver more sustainable changes in behaviour.
- 5.5 Partnership working is at the core of those intentions and there is a strong track record of positive partnership working in Milton Keynes. It is too early to say to what extent the local programme will lead to significant advancements in co-ordinated joined up working between agencies. However, there is some promising evidence that working with the whole family and not just index individuals within it is becoming more common across partners.

6. Other considerations / Key Partnership Involvement

- 6.1 Refreshed multi-agency governance arrangements for the programme have been achieved by combining the Programme Board with the Youth Offending Strategic Board. The new joint Board met for the first time in July and is Chaired by the Corporate Director - People

6.2 Attachments/Background Papers:

Summary Slide and information (Annex A [i & ii])

Details of Briefing Sessions (Annex B)