

PRIORITY FAMILIES – PHASE 2

The Priority Families programme is the name given to the Government sponsored Troubled Families initiative, in Warwickshire. Phase 1 of the scheme has operated since April 2012 and runs until March 2015.

The aim of the programme is to change the lives of families who have many problems and indeed cause many problems in their local area... they also cost cash-strapped services a lot of money just to contain them in a mess, rather than getting to the root causes of what's going wrong for them as a family".
(*Louise Casey- Director General of the Priority Families Unit*)

Phase 1 of the programme in Warwickshire has been recognised as a success by the Priority Families Unit at DCLG. Warwickshire has therefore been selected to be an 'Early Starter' on Phase 2. The County has agreed to progress this and invites Districts and Boroughs to engage with the Phase 2 programme.

The Government funding for Phase 2 is much less than in Phase 1. Districts & Boroughs have therefore been asked by County to make a contribution. An amount of £66,000 per annum for 3 years had been suggested by County as the contribution anticipated from WDC. Officers considered that, even though the aims of the programme were supported, this would not represent good value for money.

The reservations of officers were related to the focus of work and outcomes for families known to us. Following discussions with the lead officer for the programme it is considered that the location of a Support Worker for the scheme alongside our staff would allow for significant improvements on the operation of Phase 1 and also facilitate our ongoing work with targeted families, once they have left the Government scheme.

It is therefore recommended that £15,000 per annum, for a period of 3 years from 1st April 2015, be made available for the Priority Families programme, from the New Homes Bonus budget. The Priority Families programme runs for 5 years, but the County budget currently is for a 3 year period. A further decision would need to be taken as to whether to continue with funding after 2018.

The role of the Support Worker will be to act as lead professional for those families identified by Warwick District Council as being eligible for the 'Early Starter' programme. To provide targeted and intensive support to families experiencing complex and multiple issues through sustained intervention using whole family assessment and utilising partner agencies to effect and sustain positive change for the family, individual members and the community around them. To deliver and co-facilitate a range of evidence based interventions in accordance with the Warwickshire Priority Families programme.