

BRIEFING

To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Re: Update on Priority Families Programme

Purpose of Report

1.1 This report seeks to provide an update on Phase 2 of the Priority Families Programme.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee notes and comments on the progress made in relation to Phase Two of the Priority Families Programme;

2.2 That Committee notes issues in terms of extending the Programme from March 2018 to March 2020 and efforts to integrate the Programme within the overall Context of the Journey of the Child and the business of the Children and Families Unit.

2.3 That the Committee gives guidance on areas that would strengthen collaborative working to improve outcomes for children and families in the District.

3. Background

3.1 Phase One of the national Troubled Families Programme (in Warwickshire known as the Priority Families Programme) commenced on 1st April 2012 and concluded on 31st March 2015. The first phase required us to work with 805 families across 3 national criteria. A total of £4000 was available per family through a combination of an upfront attachment fee and subsequent payment by results where significant and sustained progress could be demonstrated.

3.2 As a result of the success locally and nationally, Government indicated that there would be a second phase of the Programme which would run from April 2015 to March 2020.

3.3 Phase 2 is significantly different to Phase 1 in that:

- The headline criteria (see 3.4 below) for the identification of families are broader and more flexible

- The notion of 'local criteria' to be viewed alongside national criteria has been removed (although there is considerable local discretion in the setting of local indicators under the headline criteria)
- There is an emphasis on earlier intervention, working with vulnerable families with multiple problems, and those that are a high cost to the taxpayer.
- The numbers of families to work with and turn round are significantly higher than in Phase One (2,790 families over 5 years)
- The amount 'invested' by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in the Programme on a per family basis has been reduced by 55% from £4000 above to £1800. Of this £1800, £1000 is payable upfront via an attachment fee and the remainder is on a 'payment by results' where significant and sustained progress can be demonstrated.

3.4 The headline criteria for Phase 2 are:

- § Parents and children involved in crime and 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

In order to be eligible for the Programme a family must 'fit' at least two headline criteria. The headline criteria are described in the chart below:



3.5 There are a number of critical distinctions between those criteria for Phase 2 that are comparable to the Phase One criteria around Crime / Anti-Social Behaviour, Education and Worklessness in that:

- In relation to Crime / Anti-Social Behaviour the emphasis has been changed to include adult crime as well as youth crime, and a focus on families where there is a member with parenting responsibility is in prison or on licence
- In relation to Education, changing the basis for identifying families through poor school attendance from Unauthorised Absence to the DfE definition of Persistence Absence which aggregates both authorised and unauthorised attendance. Attendance targets have also been raised from 85% to 90%
- In relation to Worklessness broadening the criteria beyond families in receipt of DWP Work Related Benefits to families with adults claiming Universal Credit and subject to work conditions, families with young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training) or RONI (at risk of NEET) and families at risk of financial exclusion

3.6 All Local Authorities are required to produce an Outcomes Plan to demonstrate eligibility for each of the criteria and also the thresholds that need to be met to ensure successful claims under payment by results. The Outcomes Plan for Warwickshire can be accessed via www.warwickshire.gov.uk/priorityfamilies

4. Phase 2

4.1 Attached as Appendix 1 is the latest data in relation to Phase 2 which provides a snapshot of the first 20 months of the Programme. Key issues to note are:

- We are well on course for attaching the requisite number of families for this year. The Programme with confidence will reach the required attachment figure of 1467 by end March 2017.
- A total of 366 claims have been submitted for the current financial year at half year period and we are confident of surpassing 400 by year end. When added to the 60 claims for the whole of 2015/16 a total of 460 claims will have been made in the first 2 years of the Programme.
- By year end the programme in Phase 2 (April 2015-March 2017) has yielded:
 - £1,467,000 in attachment fees
 - £368,000 in PBR
 - £450,000 in Service Transformation Grant
 Resulting in £2,285,000 additional resources over the first 2 years of the Programme.

4.2 When examined in conjunction with the Annual Summary (which is available on the website), key themes to emerge during Phase 2 are:

- Payment by Results is significantly more difficult than it was in Phase 1. A total of 60 claims were submitted in 2015/16 which was far less than the 75% return rate that had been envisaged at the outset. Discussions with other Local

Authorities both regionally and nationally indicate that this is not solely an issue confined to Warwickshire.

- All Local Authorities have sought to balance the tension inherent in Phase 2, which, on the one hand requires an early intervention approach and at the same time expects the Programme to work with the most complex families who are causing the greatest financial burdens. Both locally and nationally the trend has been to work with those families with complex needs who are also incurring significant costs.
- Locally there is a greater geographic dispersal than was the case under Phase 1.
- Collectively, the two phases of the Programme have now been in operation since 2012. Close and intensive working with families is resulting in patterns and trends that are now being aggregated (locally and nationally) as policy issues. Key themes that have been drawn to the attention of DCLG are:
 - The impact of online gaming on behaviour and social interaction
 - Growing trends of Home Education where the home life may not be conducive to such arrangements
 - The need for Automatic FSM registration for those Families who are entitled but not claiming
 - The need for the Education criteria to focus as much on distance travelled as destination reached.

4.3 Despite recent media coverage, discussions with DCLG have indicated that the Programme will continue until 2020 albeit with a change in emphasis as a result of Government's emergent Social Justice proposals. Further details are likely in April 2017 and will result in consultation with Local Authorities.

Warwick District

4.4 Whereas the Programme in the past was concentrated more heavily in Nuneaton and Bedworth, there has been a greater geographic dispersal under Phase 2. 281 families reside within the District though as with other areas, families tend to be concentrated in certain wards and areas and there is a significant correlation with issues of deprivation. Within Warwick, there is a Locality Panel that meets monthly to look at those families that are 'stuck'. These Panels are multi-agency and look at families on an exception basis where a holistic approach is required to solutions.

4.5 This multi-agency dimension is crucial to the operation of the Programme when seen within the context of Appendix 2. As will be noted, approximately half of families engaged in the programme locally are also tenants of the District Council. Working together across the spectrum of the six criteria ensures mutual benefit in areas of housing enforcement, arrears, reduction of anti-social behaviour/domestic abuse, school attendance and de-escalation from Social Care. More importantly the concept of a single key worker within a multi-agency setting also seeks to ensure significant and sustained change in the families that we are working with many of whom face issues that are entrenched and intergenerational.

4.6 Working with local Boroughs and Districts, therefore, has been an important facet of the Programme and one that we are keen to strengthen further. Borough/Districts are represented on the Priority Families Programme Board, Locality Panels and have worked together to develop innovative practices. Partnership working with Warwick District is particularly strong and is evidenced by a jointly funded Housing/Family Support Worker post that has been in place since 2015. A recent evaluation has demonstrated real and tangible benefits and has the potential to foster innovative working practices that link the needs of the family with housing services and revenue and benefits. The arrangement has also fostered better partnership working both at the frontline and strategically between management. Further details are attached as Appendix 3. The innovation fostered through such working has led to a similar arrangement being explored with Orbit in Stratford District.

5. Workstreams & Priorities

5.1 The Outcomes Framework which is reviewed annually contains a list of workstreams for the year that seek to sustain and develop the effectiveness of the Programme during that year. Key workstreams detailed are:

- Partnerships
- Sustainable Progress Made by Families
- Identification and Referral of Families
- Audit
- Finance
- Cost Benefit Analysis
- Performance
- Employment and Financial Inclusion
- Crime and ASB
- Data Intelligence and Information Sharing

5.2 In terms of priorities for the Priority Families Co-Ordination Team to support the above the above:

- To achieve significant and sustained progress for a further 2790 Warwickshire Families identified as Priority Families and secure maximum PBR possible.
- To make work an ambition for all Priority Families where out of work benefits are being claimed and to ensure that all children within a family who are able to access their educational entitlement do so.
- To transform the way that Warwickshire works with families with multiple problems to take an integrated whole family approach-embedding Priority Families approach across Warwickshire.
- Identify the demand that attached Priority Families place on reactive services and how implementing the Priority Families approach can successfully reduce this.

- To demonstrate that this way of working results in lower costs and savings for the taxpayer

6. Sustaining & Mainstreaming

6.1 As mentioned above, Government have reaffirmed their commitment to the Troubled Families Programme until March 2020. In Warwickshire, the commitment was until March 2018 to coincide with the One Organisational Plan 2014-18. Currently an annual commitment of £425,000 is made by the County Council. This was based on a business model that envisaged three income streams of:

- Attachment Fees (£1000 per family)
- Payment By Results (£800 per family) at 75% of families worked with
- Service Transformation Grant (200k p.a to cover central co-ordination costs)

6.2 In terms of expenditure all monies received from the above (save the Service Transformation Grant which covers core costs relating to management, co-ordination and data analysis) is spent on employing 34 Family Support Workers, 2 Youth Workers, Attendance and Compliance Support which provide intensive family, employment and education support to a significant proportion of the families that we work with. Contribution to the Early Help Service (formerly CAF) enable the strengthening of partner agency capabilities to work with families and help contribute towards the delivery of the programme. Occasionally (and resources permitting) additional services have been commissioned where a need has been highlighted and there is a gap.

6.3 It should be noted that the sum total of the commissioned services above not only help deliver the Programme in line with national requirements; but they also make a significant contribution locally in terms of sustaining tenancies , reducing ASB and both avoiding escalation of issues to Social Care and helping de-escalation from Social Care. This in itself has improved outcomes for families and also reduced the demand on statutory services which are more expensive.

6.4 Notwithstanding the income streams above it was expected the anticipated deficits that would be accrued over the three years would be met through a proportionate drawdown from Reserves that had been accumulated during Phase 1. These Reserves will be depleted by the end of March 2018.

6.5 In the longer term a decision will also be required as to whether there is a collective commitment to extend the local duration of the Programme to March 2020 to align with national expectations. This would require a greater commitment than the current £425,000 currently allocated by County Council-due to the depletion of Reserves. In return this would yield an additional £1.5 million in guaranteed income that would approximately be available from DCLG between 2018-2020 through attachment fees and Service Transformation Grants and Payment by Results.

6.6 Government have been keen to stress that there will be no Phase 3 of the Programme. As such efforts are now underway to embed the work of Priority Families within the overall fabric of the Children and Families Unit and particularly the transformative work around the Journey of the Child which in addition to

providing seamless pathways of service provision will also help overall efforts to safely reduce the number of looked after children. Key elements of that vision entail

Values and Principles

1. Our **focus is the child** and the family and the outcomes we can help them achieve - with their voice at the centre of our engagement
2. We value and make the most of **partnerships and our colleagues** and the skills they bring to the table (including our foster carers)
3. We **avoid duplication and bureaucracy** wherever we can and
4. We share a **single system for assessment and a single plan** - wherever children and young people receive help.
5. We work together to safely deliver within the **context of financial constraint** and seek the opportunities as well as facing the challenges this provides

Priorities

1. Developing a joined up children and families **pathway for children in need of help and protection**, which proactively aims to break the cycle of poor outcomes in families - along with a range of interventions, we particularly want to focus on getting parents into work and children attending education.
2. Supporting children in their own families and where this is not possible in local alternatives - this will include a **real focus on alternatives to care for young people**, but also a drive to recruit and retain colleague foster carers to offer real placement variety and choice
3. Promoting and supporting **excellence and consistency** in the quality of practice and **making Warwickshire the best place to practice**.

7. Summary

7.1 This report seeks to provide an update on Phase 2 of the Programme and a summary of both the achievements, challenges and priorities both for the Programme and the Team

7.2 In addition to Members noting progress thus far particular attention is drawn to issues in relation to extending the programme from 2018 to 2020 to ensure alignment with national timelines and the considerable work that is now being undertaken to ensure that the key principles and practice of Priority Families (lead worker, information sharing, multi agency and robust evidence) are embedded both within the Children and Families Unit and also amongst partner agencies-as opposed to being a standalone programme.

8. Appendices

- Appendix 1—Performance Dashboard & Geographical Analysis

- <https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-1043-144>
 - <https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-1043-145>
- Appendix 2—Housing Tenure Analysis
 - <https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-1043-149>
- Appendix 3-WDC Housing Officer Evaluation
 - <https://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-1043-143>