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Dear Mr Haywood,

TROUBLED FAMILIES – PRIME MINISTER’S ANNOUNCEMENT

Further to my letter of 17th November, I am pleased to be able to write again with further information about the Government’s commitment to turn around the lives of 120,000 of England’s most troubled families.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister alongside the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, announced additional resources totalling £448m over the next three years for the programme. This new funding, I believe, shows a real determination by the Government to back this programme of work and builds upon the recently launched European Social Fund Programme for Families with Multiple Problems.

Six government departments have contributed and, just as importantly, have committed to working in unison to help us deliver this programme. Feedback to me over recent weeks from the LGA and from colleagues in local authorities has been that Whitehall departments need to be better at joining up and focussing on this commitment if we’re to be successful. You can rest assured that I agree that this needs to be a priority and will work to make this happen, but I’m immensely heartened by departments putting money into the pot for the national programme budget which I believe signals we are very much working towards a shared goal. I am certain that this willingness will be more than matched by the drive, determination and local leadership that will now be shown in how you approach troubled families in your area.

Previous government research has shown that there are at least 120,000 families fitting the description of a “troubled family” in England. These are families experiencing multiple problems and disadvantages, such as worklessness, truancy, drug and alcohol addiction and also causing problems such as anti-social behaviour. New analysis shows that these families are a significant drain on the public purse, costing us all over £9bn a year (on average, £75,000 per family per year) and it will come as no surprise to you to hear that most of this bill falls to local authorities.

Using the research referred to above we estimate that there are 460 such troubled families in your area, at an estimated cost to the taxpayer of £34.500m.

Joe Tuke is the Director here and will lead for me on the implementation of the national programme. He'll write to you shortly with further detail on how the estimated number of families in your area was calculated, what you can expect from us in working together to achieve successful outcomes for those families – parents into work, children attending school, reduced crime and anti-social behaviour and cutting costs for the State – and importantly what we expect in return.

We will be using the additional money announced today to offer you up to 40% of the cost of interventions that can help turn around these families' lives, payable on achievement of successful outcomes. Joe will also set out further information on how the incentives scheme will operate; there are still details to be worked up and we will remain in close touch with you over the weeks and months ahead. I believe this to be a major opportunity for local agencies to make a dramatic change to the lives of families in a relatively short space of time – and to make significant cashable savings, service redesign and efficiencies and redirection of resources possible for you and your local partners.

Many of you have told me, and it's been apparent to me and my team from visits and meetings around the country that we've had so far, that, in addition to some welcome new funding, what you also need are a person or sometimes people at a sufficiently senior level who can be dedicated to gripping your local programme of action. We are therefore offering you funding of £ 100,000 per annum for 3 years from 2012/13 just for this purpose. These are very important posts to both you and us: they will play an integral role in both the local and national strategy. We will expect these people to champion, coordinate and troubleshoot the efforts of you and your local partners to ensure you achieve success in your local programme.

In Whitehall I'm making the case as strongly as I can that local government should be a key agent in the delivery of this challenging programme; my team and I will do all we can to support you but we need you to make speedy progress over the next few months in identifying your families, engaging your partners and planning your local activity so that you're ready and prepared to make the most of the financial incentives on offer from the start of the next financial year.

I would be grateful, therefore, if you could let us know, via the email address below, **contact details for a lead officer for troubled families in your authority by Monday 9th January.**

This is a fantastic opportunity to fight the problems of inter-generational poverty, disadvantage and disconnection from the mainstream of society which have blighted parts of our communities. We can offer you money and commitment from central Government and relentless commitment from me and my Troubled Families Team here in DCLG to help you meet these challenges.

I very much look forward to working with you.



LOUISE CASEY