

North Tyneside Council Report to Cabinet Date: 13 February 2012

ITEM 6 (h)

Troubled Families:
North Tyneside Council's
Response

Portfolio(s): Children, Young People and Learning

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr. David Lilly

Report from Directorate: Children, Young People and Learning

Report Author: Paul Cook, Head of Preventative and Safeguarding

Tel : 6437381

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Purpose:

To seek Cabinet's approval for proposals that re-design the Council's early help and support services for troubled families.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet endorse the proposed actions, set out in this report, to develop Council services (in collaboration with partner agencies), to identify and work with troubled families in the borough.

1.3 Forward plan:

This report appears on the Forward Plan for the period 1 February to 31 May 2012.

1.4 Council plan and policy framework:

This report is relevant to the following Council Strategic Plan 2011-15 priority:

Our Families and Children: Shaping Services Around Families

Priority 1: Our People – to give every family the opportunity to have an excellent quality of life and all our children achieve their potential.

1.5 Information:

The Council's Change, Efficiency and Improvement Programme (Theme A) highlights the moral and financial imperatives for working at an early stage with vulnerable and troubled families. The recent rise in the number of children looked after and those subject to a protection plan reflects an increasing cost to the Council but also a level of significant need in our communities.

Where we can act safely to prevent children and young people coming into care or being the subjects of a protection plan we should do so.

For this vision to be successful we must act in partnership with other agencies. The Police and Health Services are key partners. We will also work with Probation, schools, the Courts etc and the voluntary sector.

A multi-agency 'shaping group' has been established under the North Tyneside Community Budget initiative. The group will ensure there is better join up between the Council's early help and support services and that provided particularly by health visitors and the police. The recent re-design of the Police Public Protection Unit and the increase in health visitors in the borough offer significant opportunities for service and system re-design that will impact upon vulnerable families. Agencies will share information more effectively, work in stronger partnership and ensure that there is early notification and identification of families that require early help and support in order to make a long term difference to the outcomes for the children. We note that a Family Nurse Partnership that comes on stream in 2013/14 will be an enhancement of the overall service available.

The service re-design will include improved information sharing protocols, a multi agency assessment team, a Crisis Intervention Team and the provision of family coaches/mentors to work intensively with families. The re-designed service will engage 'hard to reach' families with universal, direct access services and also targeted services that will address their needs; particularly in the area of attachment and care of children. We will ensure outcomes and impact are monitored and the families tracked to ensure their journey through the support services is as effective as possible. Our Children Centres will provide an early life offer to ensure the children are prepared for learning in school and have their physical, social and emotional wellbeing accounted for.

The Troubled Families Programme is a new Government Initiative that supports the Council and partner agencies to work in a new and collaborative way to 'break through' to families who are resistant to change from lifestyles that cause poor outcomes for their children. Often poorly engaged with schools and health services, perhaps involved in anti-social and criminal behaviour they can be disruptive to neighbourhoods and communities. These families can require extensive and costly intervention from social care, health, enforcement and judicial agencies, particularly if not engaged with early and the problems then get worse. Multi agency actions that create the new environment to intervene which such families will bring about positive outcomes and cashable savings to all agencies as well as improved outcomes.

In November 2011 the Government appointed Louise Casey to the post of Director General, Troubled Families Team within the Department for Communities and Local Government. She announced a major programme to turn around the lives of '120,000 troubled families' by the end of this Parliament.

Additional resources have been made available to councils to help to identify vulnerable and troubled families. This is to ensure the necessary service re-designs, taking the fullest opportunity to make a difference to families with complex needs.

Government figures show North Tyneside to have approximately 460 troubled families. This figure is extrapolated from the families involved with our Family Intervention Team and links to socio-economic conditions in the area.

The Troubled Families programme will advance our Community Budget Plans and Early Help and Support re-design and is in line with our commitment to an early help offer to vulnerable families. In the next 3 months we will:

- Undertake further analysis of the identified cohort to identify those who require intensive and prolonged work to turn their lives around.
- Develop a multi-agency business plan that will re-design services to work successfully with troubled families in a manner that promotes success.
- Track the progress of the programme and use the lessons learnt to enhance the effectiveness of other work streams.
- Appoint a 'Troubled Family Co-ordinator' who will be the key link to the Government's Troubled Families Team.

The coming together of a number of programmes and initiatives offers a unique opportunity to make a difference to families who are often trapped in an inter-generational cycle of disadvantage. The resultant poor outcomes for children and young people are a matter of grave concern. The multi-agency service redesign proposed is a system response across a range of agencies that stands a real chance of making lasting improvements for those in our communities that need help and assistance to take advantage of the real opportunities that our schools, health services and community based provision offers.

Progress with this programme as of January 2012 has:

- Agreed to the establishment of a multi agency panel for the appointment of the Troubled Families Coordinator. This illustrates and strengthens the partnership approach to the implementation of the programme.
- The meeting of the multi-agency shaping group has agreed a theme of 'early intervention' and 'crisis support' to families in need. The two themes will be operationally developed through an intensive scrutiny of 'live' cases from health, children's social care, adult social care, job centre plus, the community safety team and the police. The lessons drawn from these case studies will be influential in the subsequent multi-agency service re-design.
- The development in partner agencies of a Community Budget/Troubled Families key senior manager who will ensure his/her agency is fully briefed on all aspects of the service re-design and will act as a broker to overcome any obstacles to the full development of the programme.

1.6 Decision options:

- a. To agree the proposals to identify troubled families in the borough and the subsequent multi-agency actions to work to turn their lives around.
- b. Not to agree the proposals and require the Head of Preventative and Safeguarding Services under the direction of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Learning to consult further and formulate an alternative plan.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Cabinet is asked to endorse the proposals as outlined. These are funded through additional government funding. The moral and financial imperative to work with such families is clear. The timescale for doing so is an urgent one and Cabinet's endorsement will ensure we keep to timetable.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Letters from the Department of for Communities and Local Government dated 17 November 2011, 16 December 2011 and 22 December 2011.

1.9 Contact officers:

Paul Cook: Head of Preventative and Safeguarding Services – 0191 643 7381

Anthony Gollings: Financial Business Manager for CYPL and Finance & Resources – 0191 643 8071

1.10 Background information:

- Turning Around the lives of 120,000 troubled families (17 November 2011)
- Troubled Families – Prime Ministers Announcement (16 December 20 11)
- Troubled Families – Initial plans (22 December 2011)
- Community Budget Proposals
- CEI Proposals

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The programme is fully funded through additional funds provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in 2011/12 and 2012/13 and beyond. In 2011/12 £20,000 is provided for the additional work required to put in place the required information sharing and linked infrastructure.

Grant funding of £100,000 per annum is to be provided by DCLG for 3 years starting in 2012/13 to cover salary and related costs of the Troubled Families Co-ordinator service.

2.2 Legal

The programme promotes the aims of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 with respect to early help and support for vulnerable families and children in need.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Consultation with our communities and service users has shown there is support for the Council to work with partners to address the needs of vulnerable children, young people and their families at the earliest opportunity.

2.4 Human rights

The proposals support the rights of children to a safe and secure home life.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

The proposals ensure that vulnerable families will be provided with routes out of disadvantage through accessing the programme and its benefits.

2.6 Risk management

The proposals will be appropriately risk managed to ensure the Council and partners are not exposed to unmanageable operational or strategic risks.

2.7 Crime and disorder

The proposals support actions taken through the Councils Safer Communities Strategy to address issues of crime and disorder.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Strategic Director(s)
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Strategic Director with responsibility for community engagement



Report authors

Paul Cook
Head of Preventative and Safeguarding