

**Meeting:** Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee

**Date:** 19 October 2015

**Title:** Troubled Families Programme

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**Service:** Children, Young People and Learning Supporting Families

**Wards affected:** All

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### 1. Purpose:

This report provides the Committee with an update on the progress with the Troubled Families (TF) programme in the borough.

### 2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to note the progress that has been made in developing the TF programme and where appropriate make comments and / or recommendations.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The TF programme was launched by the Prime Minister, David Cameron, in 2012, after the riots in the South East in 2011. Its aim was to identify and 'turn round' those families who were deemed to be troubled through using data to identify them.
- 3.2 Between 2012 and 2015, North Tyneside Council (NTC) had to identify, work with and turn round 460 families who met 2 out of 3 criteria:
- 1) Anti Social Behaviour or Crime
  - 2) Worklessness
  - 3) Poor attendance or exclusion

These three were seen as key because:

- TF children 36 times more likely to be excluded from school
- TF children 6 times more likely to go into care
- 1/3 have child protection issues
- Over 50% of children permanently excluded come from TF
- One-in-five young offenders come from TF

- 3.3 Using data to identify families, rather than assessing them as having a need or meeting a threshold made the programme a very different approach to what was usually done – and so it took a while for people to get used to this way of working.

- 3.4 Another difference in the programme is that it is a 'Payment by results' programme and so 60% of the funding is provided when families are identified but the remaining 40% is only paid once they have been turned round and changes sustained for a period of time e.g. for school attendance, that must happen for three full terms.
- 3.5 Delivering this programme also meant changing the way we worked with families. Using an evidence based approach developed in the 1990s we created a new role – 'Family Partner' which has 5 distinct characteristics:
- 1) A dedicated worker dedicated to the family
  - 2) Who looks at what's really happening for the family as a whole
  - 3) And gives practical hands-on support
  - 4) With an assertive and challenging approach
  - 5) Backed by an agreed plan and common purpose among the relevant services
- 3.6 What this means is that this approach is also characterised by ensuring that it follows the 'mantra' of one worker, one plan, one family. Often families have many workers, all dealing with one issue e.g.
- An Education Welfare Officer deals with attendance
  - The Police / probation deal with crime
  - Job Centre Plus deal with worklessness

as well as a range of other workers all dealing with other issues such as domestic violence, debt or mental health for example. This can be confusing for families – and workers – so this approach sees the Family Partner act as the person who holds it all together with the family and ensures things are done when needed for the family.

Appendix A (p.5) shows what it used to be like and Appendix B (p.6) shows how it works through this approach

- 3.7 In the 2012-2015 phase of the programme our claim rate was 97.3% - all but 3 of our families and this success has been replicated nationally.

#### **4. Current Situation**

As a result of its success the programme has been extended from 2015-2020 but, based on information gathered during the first phase is now much bigger:

We now have to work with 1480 families in that timescale. There are now 6 criteria:

- School attendance / Exclusion
- Anti-social behaviour / Crime
- Worklessness / Financial Exclusion / Young person at risk of worklessness
- Domestic Violence
- Parents / children with a range of health problems
- Children who need help

We now define what they mean for us in North Tyneside – this has been done with all our partners to ensure linkage to other strategic plans and the 'North Tyneside Troubled Families Outcome Plan' (TFOP) has been developed. This sets out our priorities in relation to the criteria, the data sets to be used for identification and the data sets to be used for the claim, as well as the time period for the claim. A copy of the TFOP is available if anyone would like a copy.

4.2 The TFOP has identified 48 data sets for identification - using such a large data set means we will probably identify more than 1480 families, so in addition to meeting the criteria, families will be prioritised who are:

- High cost to the public purse
- Would benefit from an integrated whole family approach

And again, working with partners we have defined what those mean for us in North Tyneside.

4.3 We also have to ensure that we use this opportunity to create 'whole system change' to enable this way of working to become embedded across all agencies and departments.

4.4 Finally, we have to submit – in addition to the claim data – additional data about the families we work with to enable local and central government to fully understand the nature of the families and the issues they face as well as indentifying the costs of the families and how working with them in this way contributes to cost savings to all agencies and departments.

4.5 The new programme is governed through a multi agency strategic group reporting to the North Tyneside Strategic Partnership.

## 5. Challenges

5.1 This is a big programme, requiring us to all to think differently, but it 'dovetails' with the Creating A Brighter Future programme and the new target operating model to increase our work at an earlier, more preventable stage with families.

5.2 Specific challenges include:

- Creating culture change and whole system change requires the whole system to understand that
- Working with other agencies to get them to take on board this approach and understand the collective responsibility we have to families.
- Getting people to work in a whole family way – no more 'not my job'; 'I don't deal with that'
- Prioritising families who don't have assessed 'needs'
- Giving staff the skills and the time to work with families to create sustainable change.

## 6. Families Experience

"I've had lots of workers involved with me – from health, social services, schools, police – they made me feel like I was in a goldfish bowl. They were all looking at me and deciding what I should do.

Now, I feel my Family Partner is in the goldfish bowl with me, yes sometimes telling me difficult things but doing them with me and we decide together what I have to do."

## **7. Conclusion**

Committee members are requested to note the progress made against the Troubled Families Programme and make any further comments or recommendations around the delivery of the shared priorities.

## **8. Background Information**

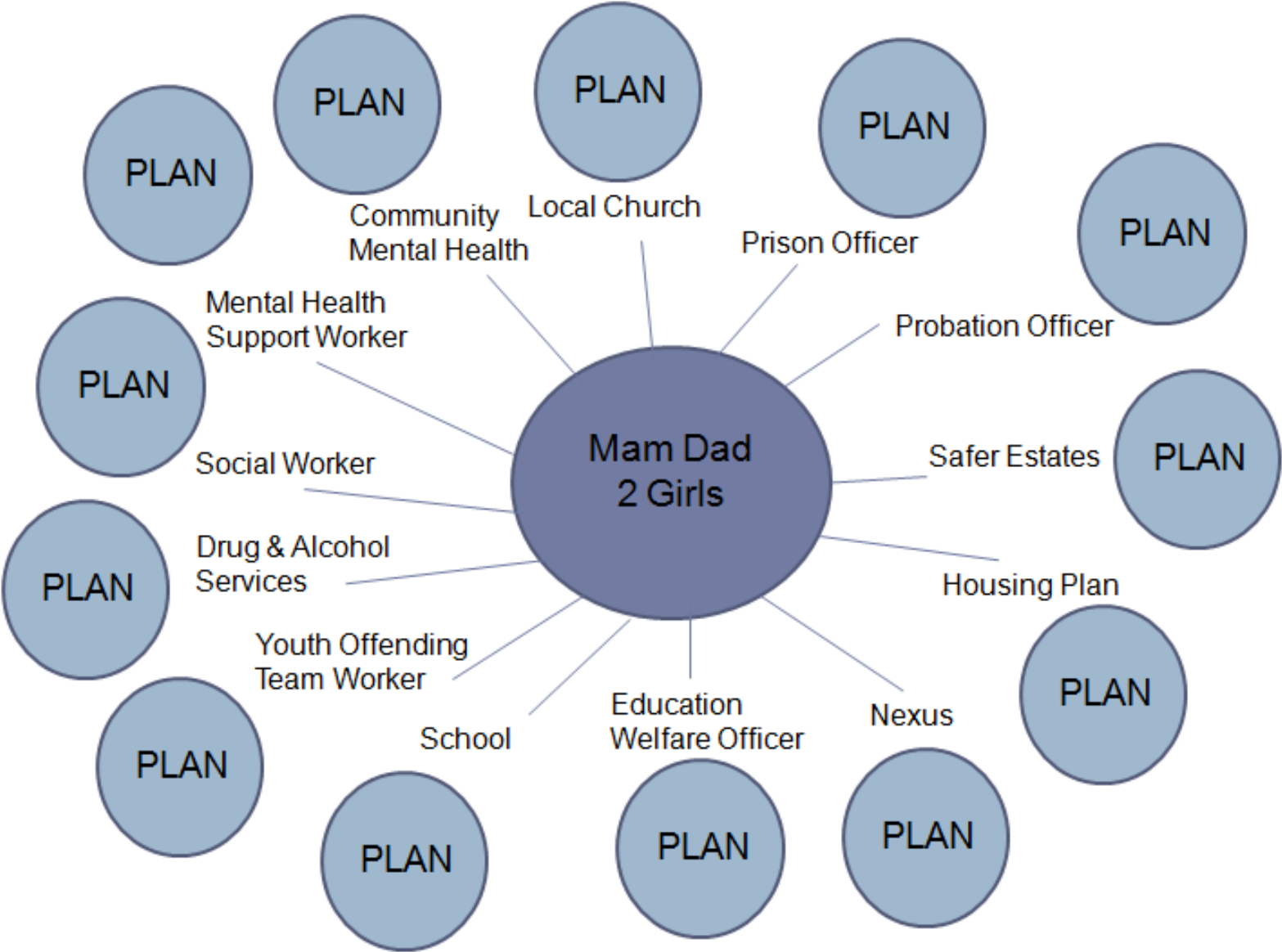
The following documents have been used in the compilation of this report and may be inspected at the office of the authors:

Troubled Families Financial framework DCLG (March 2015)

TFOP

Troubled Families Strategic Group Terms of Reference

Appendix A



Appendix B

Agency Agency Agency  
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