

UPDATE ON THE TROUBLED FAMILIES PROJECT
FOR THE SEVENOAKS LOCALITY BOARD
SEVENOAKS DISTRICT – WORKING WITH FAMILIES

1. Background to the Troubled Families Project

The Troubled Families programme was launched nationally to turn the lives around of 120,000 families by 2015. These are families who have multiple problems, are high cost to society and often cause a lot of problems for themselves, their communities and for the services trying to help them. The challenge in Kent is to better the lives of 2,560 troubled families by working directly with them in a very targeted way and by transforming and joining up public service support so it works more effectively. The Sevenoaks District project: '*Working with Families*' aims to improve the lives of approximately 101 families, roughly 4% of the Troubled Families in the county.

2. Identifying Families

The project will deliver early intervention, prevention and support to families who meet two of the following criteria:

1. Have children who are truanting or have been excluded from school, are not on a school roll or whose behaviour/attendance is causing significant concern
2. Are involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
3. Have an adult on out of work benefits/no one working in the household

There are also discretionary criteria which may indicate a family is appropriate to be included in this project, such as domestic violence or substance misuse. The presence of these additional factors will help determine the precise level of support the family receives.

Families in year 1 (2012-13) were identified by a data trawl which looked at school attendance, crime, youth offending and unemployment. Families in year 2 are nominated by staff from local agencies and organisations which work with children and families. Their nominations are then run through education, police and DWP databases to verify eligibility for the programme.

3. Aims of the project

The broad outcomes of the programme for families are:

1. Reduce risk of harm/likelihood of children being taken into care/or being on the edge of care
2. Reduce and stop all crime and anti-social behaviour
3. Help get children back into school
4. Improve stability of housing and a family's standing within the community
5. Improve physical and mental health
6. Improve family relationships and social and personal development
7. Provide specialist help for parents to find work
8. Support young people into employment via education and training
9. Improve life chances for the whole family
10. Support services are transformed and work more effectively / resources are used more efficiently.

4. Achieving outcomes

In Kent a Family Intervention Model for Troubled Families has been developed to ensure the programme is well placed to deliver improved outcomes for families. This has four delivery streams to address families' needs and is illustrated in Table 1.

Delivery Stream 1: Family Intervention Project Workers (FIP) – providing a persistent, assertive and challenging approach whilst working with families intensively for approximately 12 months. KCA has been commissioned centrally to deliver Kent's FIP project. A Senior FIP worker covering the Sevenoaks, Dartford and Gravesham Districts is now in post. A dedicated FIP worker for the Sevenoaks District and a further FIP worker shared with Dartford and Gravesham will be in post from beginning of September. Together they will be supporting 20% of the overall cohort for the district, each working with approximately six of the most challenging families.

Delivery Stream 2: 'FIP Light' Worker (Intensive Family Support Worker) – similar to the FIP worker, these will be dedicated posts focussing on family function, providing practical support. The worker will have an average of 15 families and the duration of the intervention will be approximately 6 months. Project Salus has been commissioned centrally to deliver this project for the Sevenoaks District and is in the process of recruiting a full-time worker.

Delivery Stream 3: Multi-Agency Lead Workers – these are being allocated from existing staff in key partner agencies to act as advocates for families, with the ability and authority to influence other agencies. It is envisaged that these workers will support 1-2 families over the course of a year. This will be determined by the agencies according to capacity, pressures and the 'fit' with current workloads. Staff are currently being identified to take on this role and training is being offered to improve their skills for working and communicating effectively with challenging families. This includes a worker seconded from the DWP (in place) and a worker seconded from Kent Police (being recruited) who will both be working across several districts targeting families whose main problems are around worklessness and crime, respectively.

Delivery Stream 4: Family Support Workers – this is a dedicated resource focusing on 'initiating' contact with identified troubled families and where appropriate, going on to provide longer-term support around family function. The workers will lever in and coordinate support from a wider 'team around the family' established to deliver the outcomes identified in an agreed multi-agency family action plan. In Sevenoaks this element of the programme is being delivered by 2 family support workers from Lifeways, which is part of the West Kent Housing Association under an existing contract with KCC, and they have been in place since early July.

In addition to the above the Sevenoaks District is working in partnership with the Faith sector to develop a Family Mentoring project. This will be a team of trained volunteer mentors providing on-going support once more intensive intervention is no longer required.

5. Progress with Year 1 Cohort

54 families were identified for Year 1 from a data trawl looking at school attendance, crime/anti-social behaviour and worklessness. These families have been discussed by the Sevenoaks Troubled Families Local Operations Group (LOG), which meets monthly to share information and prioritise families for support according to the complexity of their problems. To date:

- 11 families have been prioritised for intensive support from the Family Intervention Project (FIP). The Senior FIP for Sevenoaks has started to visit these families to identify their needs and start the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process in readiness for the arrival of the Sevenoaks FIP workers in September. She has also started some intensive work with three families.
- 11 families have been identified for support from a Lifeways Family Support Worker – visits are being undertaken to offer help and advice and encourage the families to undertake a CAF.
- 2 families have moved out of the area.
- 16 families no longer meet 2 or more criteria. These families are being visited to check their circumstances and ascertain whether any support is required. Many of these families were identified for the project because of poor school attendance, but have children who are no longer school age. The focus here will be to check whether they need help into training or employment. Some of these families will have received support from different agencies and we are awaiting clarification as to whether a payment by results (PbR) claim can be made.
- PbR claims have been submitted for 2 families. Both of these families had children who were not attending school and were causing anti-social behaviour. This is no longer the case – school attendance has improved and there have been no reports of ASB over the last year.
- The remaining 12 families will be offered support by a 'Light Touch FIP' worker (to be appointed) or a Lead Worker.

The LOG is attended by a wide range of agencies who are sharing information to assist in the allocation of support. Where partners already have a good relationship with families, they are contributing staff time to make initial visits to talk about the project and encourage them to agree to a CAF.

6. Year 2 Cohort

So far 34 families have been nominated for the year 2 cohort from a wide range of partners including social services, schools, the attendance and behaviour service, police, the CSU, housing and the Early Intervention Team. They will be discussed at the next LOG meeting. Further nominations will be accepted until the Sevenoaks District's allocated number of families has been reached.

7. Business Case to support the project

The Troubled Families Project Board submitted a business case to KCC for £87,000 of funding to support the Sevenoaks Project. This has been approved and is being allocated to the following:

- Recruitment of Intensive Family Support worker (Delivery Stream 2)
- Additional CAF support – (only a small number of Sevenoaks Troubled Families have a CAF at present)
- Discretionary family support fund – used to purchase small items of basic need to overcome barriers to progress and for activities to support family action plans.
- Family Mentoring Project - seed fund
- Project support for monitoring and evaluation.

8. Other supporting activities:

- Briefings to all partner agencies to raise awareness about the project.
- A 'family friendly' leaflet is being designed to help explain the programme to families.

- Lead worker training - Bespoke training sessions are being developed to support lead workers.
- Service mapping - SDC commissioned a piece of work through Churches Together to map all services in the District which support children and families. The information is now held on the SDC website and has been distributed to key partners.
- A marketplace event is being planned to promote services operating in the district, to raise awareness of the project and to provide an opportunity for services to report on progress.
- A training framework is being designed by the Core Troubled Families team which will set out the minimum standards for all multi-agency staff working with and supporting troubled families.
- Specific activities are being developed and promoted to support the programme such as:
 - Training and apprenticeship opportunities for 16-24 year olds
 - Activity days such as Challenger Troop run by the TA to raise confidence, motivation and skills, and Family activity days at Swattenden focusing on strengthening family relationships and parenting skills.

Table 1 - A Family Intervention Model for Kent

<p>Delivery Stream 1</p> <p>Family Intervention Project Workers</p>	<p>Delivery Stream 2</p> <p>FIP Light Workers</p>	<p>Delivery Stream 3</p> <p>Lead Workers</p>	<p>Delivery Stream 4</p> <p>Family Support Workers</p>
<p>Family Intervention</p> <p>“Intensive”</p> <p>small caseloads</p>	<p>Family Intervention</p> <p>“Light”</p> <p>up to 15 families per worker</p>	<p>Family Intervention</p> <p>“Super light”</p> <p>1-2 families per worker</p>	<p>Family Intervention</p> <p>“Light”</p> <p>Small caseloads</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical hands on support • Assertive and challenging approach • Tenacious and relentless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on family function • Accessible, there when they are needed • Practical support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Named lead for family with dedicated time • Coordinate “Team Around the Family” support • Advocate for family and authority to influence other agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical hands on support • Focus on family function • Named lead for family

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