

BRIEFING FOR SEVENOAKS STRATEGIC BOARD – 2 JULY 2014

Sevenoaks District – Working with Families

1. Number of Families

- We have 120 families on our list (this is in excess of our allocation of 101 so we are doing well with regard to nominations and we are still accepting more).
- 72% of these families are being supported either by FIP, FIP Light, Lead worker or Family Support Worker.
- 13% have refused support offered to them. If their situation deteriorates, we will approach them again.
- 15% of families are waiting to be allocated support.

2. Staff Challenges

We have had some challenges with the recruitment and retention of staff.

- Initially the number and quality of applicants made it difficult to appoint to the post of FIP and FIP Light. Both of these roles require intensive work with very challenging families. Working hours can be unsociable and long, particularly if workers are supporting families at the beginning and end of the day with household routines and practical parenting issues. We have lost some workers who were unable to meet the demands of the role or resigned to take up posts elsewhere.
- With regard to FIP and Family Support workers we should have:
 - i. FIP (KCA): one full-time, one part-time - at present we have only one part-time. A fulltime worker has just been appointed to start on 14 July.
 - ii. FIP Light (Project Salus): two full-time, one part-time – at present we have one full-time and one part-time just started. The further full-time worker is being recruited.
 - iii. FSW(Lifeways): two full-time – we have been managing with one full-time worker but a second started in post last week.

3. Progress with Families

We have managed to make claims for 23 of our families. The majority of these are due to improvements in ASB/ Crime and attendance at school. 3 of these claims are for succeeding in getting individuals back to work.

Our FIP/FIP Light and Family Support Workers have been focusing on addressing the problems underlying the reasons for school absence, asb/crime and worklessness. The underlying problems and type of work they are undertaking include:

- Housing issues – sorting out debt and rent arrears as a result of inaccuracies with benefit claims. Establishing realistic payment plans which are acceptable to landlords in order to avoid eviction. Addressing behaviour leading to disputes between neighbours
- Domestic Violence – identifying the problem and supporting victims and perpetrators to access help.
- Substance misuse – identifying the extent of the problem and supporting individuals to get help.
- Mental Health and depression – identifying where help is needed, sorting out delays in receiving support, chasing referrals, accompanying families to appointments.
- Complex relationships – many of our families are one-parent families, have complex family structures, or are dealing with family breakdown. They are struggling to cope with family routines, managing children's behaviour, running a home and other

associated issues. Some parents have not recognised that they are failing to meet the needs of their children or that their parenting skills could be improved. This is a major area of work for our FIPs.

- Worklessness - 55% of our families have been identified as receiving DWP out of work benefits. Getting families back into work has been challenging because:
 - 79% of these are getting either Employment Support Allowance because of ill-health, Carers Allowance because they are looking after someone for more than 35 hours a week, or Income Support because they have very young children, work part-time and are on a low income.
 - We are working closely with DWP to ensure that work capability assessments are carried out and to offer support for those who might be able to take up some form of work in the near future.
 - Many of these families suffer from emotional and mental health conditions and have been repeatedly signed off on long-term sick by their GP. Where possible, our FIP workers are focusing on ensuring that their needs are being met and will be encouraging them towards employment or training as soon as possible.

National Programme

Matt Algar/David Weiss attended national co-ordinators meeting last week at which the following points were noted:

1. All political parties are very much behind the Troubled Families approach and have indicated that the programme should continue beyond March 15 using the same model i.e. FIP/FIP Light/FSW and Lead Workers, but with 29 indicators instead of 3. (some of these additional indicators will be around health/mental health and domestic abuse).
2. There is likely to be three times as many families allocated to the programme i.e. for Kent this would be 7,500 families from 2015 over the next 5 years.
3. Major challenge for all Counties – to expand number of lead professionals who are taking the Think Family Approach – i.e. working holistically with the whole family. In Kent a message has been relayed to all lead professionals encouraging them to adopt this approach, using one plan for one family
4. Across Kent we have turned around 29% of our 2,500 families. The national average is 33%. Some Local Authorities have managed to turn around more than 41% of their families – most of these had the FIP model in place before the project started.

Focus for next few months

1. More accurate data capture in Kent (other Local Authorities capture more data than us). The Troubled Families team is recruiting two additional data analysts to help with this.
2. Stepping up work with families that have made improvements, but are not quite 'turned around' i.e. meeting the target to enable a claim to be made
3. Stopping drift of those families not moving further forwards.
4. Special focus on those receiving JSA – to ensure they are getting all possible support to get them into work.
5. Special focus on families receiving ESA – an additional JCP worker will be attached to the project from mid-July.
6. Project with the Kenward Trust to support a target group of young people who are misusing drugs and alcohol which is leading to antisocial behaviour and absence from school.
7. Staff training – across the workforce + sharing good practice.

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1 July 2014