



Buckinghamshire County Council Select Committee

Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee

Report to the Education, Skills and Children's Services Select Committee

Title:	Families First
Committee date:	25 March 2014
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Report signed off by Cabinet Member:	Angela Macpherson
Electoral divisions affected:	All
Purpose of Agenda Item	Information

Background

The Families First Programme is Buckinghamshire's response to the national Troubled Families Agenda, which seeks to "turn around" the lives of families where there are issues around truancy, exclusion from school, crime and antisocial behaviour or worklessness. The aim of the programme is to improve the outcomes for children and families and to reduce the burden on public sector resources.

The programme was developed in partnership with families, all statutory agencies and the voluntary and community.

Buckinghamshire's share of the 120,000 families nationally is 545.

Summary



The Families First approach had a measured start to ensure that all partners were fully engaged, and that the model was fully discussed. The model was tested through prototyping in Chesham in the spring of 2013 and then rolled out across the whole of Buckinghamshire by October 2013.

By the end of 2013 we had engaged with 523 families and are now beginning to see significant improvements in how we work, leading to real outcomes for families. This has resulted in payment by results claims for 187 families to date, and means that we are now on track against the targets set by DCLG.

The initial period of the programme was for 3 years, 2012 – 2015. This will be extended for a further year, to March 2016. Detailed information from DCLG on the criteria, numbers and financial arrangements to apply from April 2015 have not yet been published. However, it has been announced that in order to qualify for funding from April 2015 Local Authorities will need to produce a Sustainability Plan that is agreed with statutory partners.

There is cross party support for a further extension to 2020, although firm commitments are yet to be made.

The response from families so far has been overwhelmingly positive, with over 90% expressing high levels of satisfaction with the approach.

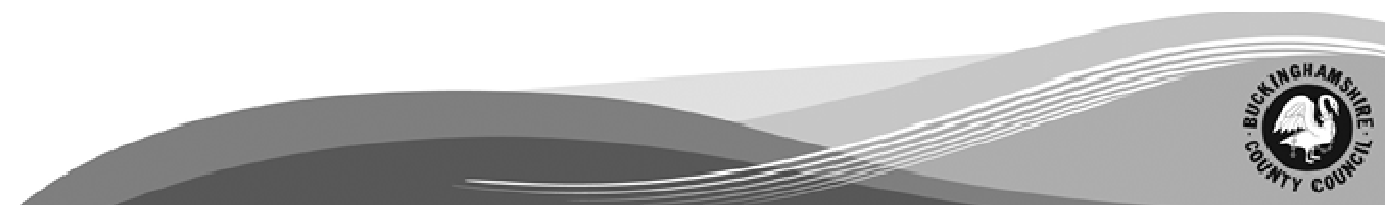
Nationally there is no 'one size fits all' approach to Troubled Families. Local Authorities have made a range of strategic choices to ensure that their systems and delivery models reflect local priorities alongside the national agenda. The Buckinghamshire systems change approach, integrating family work within existing support services across partner agencies, is increasingly being adopted as authorities recognise that simply adding an additional service is not sustainable long term.

An interim report on progress has been produced and will be available in April 2014.

Resource implications

Over the current 3 years of the programme (2012-15) funding is provided partly through a Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) grant, reducing annually and partly through an increasing payment by results element. Part of the grant is ringfenced for salary costs.

As a result of the outcomes achieved for 187 families to date, Buckinghamshire has claimed payment by results amounting to £105,000 during 2013/14. It is anticipated that



further payments will be achieved in 2014/15 and 2015/16. While these payments are not ring fenced, like the grant element, it is hoped that the majority of the money will be reinvested in the further development of services for families, to ensure that the programme is sustainable in the long term.

A FROI (Fiscal Return on Investment) was undertaken to calculate the benefits/cost ratio for ten families who have received support. From this small sample, the cost avoidance generated for every £1 invested in family support was 4.3 – for every £1 spent there was an average benefit return of £4.30. However, our view is that the evidence base to support this conclusion is insufficient and our intention is to conduct a much more rigorous assessment with a much larger sample size when the Government FROI tool is published later in 2014.

Next steps

Summer 2014:	DCLG announcement of arrangements for 2015-6
June 2014:	Payment by results claim
October 2014:	Payment by results claim
January 2015:	Final payment by results claim under current arrangements
March 2015:	End of Phase 1
April 2016:	Phase 2

Attachments

1. Summary of Families First Service
2. Newsletter
3. Case studies