

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel	Date 4th July 2013
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SUBJECT: Update on Transforming Families initiative and the PRG funded Phipps Bridge Project

Lead Officer: Yvette Stanley, Director of Children, Schools and Families Department

Lead Member: Cllr Maxi Martin

Forward Plan Reference Number: N/A

Contact Officer: Paul Angeli, Head of Social Care and Youth Inclusion

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Note the work and progress of the development of the Transforming Families initiative.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To update and report on the progress of the Troubled Families initiative in Merton along with the incorporated Phipps Bridge PRG project.

2. DETAILS

- 2.1 A Transforming Families Team has been established to meet the requirements of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Troubled Families initiative. This is a national programme of work intended to work with families who are having difficulty in managing their lives and where there are specifically concerns about worklessness, youth offending, anti social behaviour and/or non school attendance.
- 2.2 In Merton the initiative is being managed primarily through a Transforming Families Team. There has been significant progress in establishing and developing the Transforming Families Team in Merton. The team which is now fully staffed is composed of an Operations Manager, two Lead Practitioners, one Business Manager and Case Practitioners. The team began to start its work with families in January 2013.
- 2.3 The team is based within the Civic Centre and each of the workers is working at almost full capacity, 6 - 7 families per case practitioner.
- 2.4 The programme has been operational since January 2013 and to date have worked with 59 families across the Borough. The council as a whole is can

demonstrate improvement in the lives of 128 families against the criteria laid down by the DCLG. In addition to the 59 families worked with by the Transforming Families team a further 68 have been identified from across other services where improvement has been identified.

- 2.5 Of the 128 families, 109 households had young people that met the youth offending criteria or were engaged in antisocial behaviour. 68 of said young people have not reoffended in the last 3 – 12 months since TF intervention. 18 of the 128 families are new cases, which we cannot report on re outcomes as yet.
- 2.6 School attendance problems have been an issue in 42 of the 128 families. Approximately 71% of this number has shown an improvement in this area with on-going work with some families. Four of these young people were successfully supported by TF Case Practitioners to sit their GCSEs. A further 24 young people were NEET. We are still collating the education data and will be in a better position to report on this in late July when the first data claim to DCLG is submitted.
- 2.7 Achieving employment or securing preparation for the unemployed remains a significant challenge. We have however, seen some positive outcomes. One parent has started her own business and a few have secured work. A number of parents have also signed up for training courses and volunteering opportunities that aid their job readiness. We aim to step up our efforts in collaboration with Job Centre Plus and relevant voluntary organisations to support parents back into work.
- 2.8 To enable us to work with and achieve the targeted number of families, we are also currently working with the New Horizons (Commonside) community organisation in Pollards Hill. They will work in partnership and alongside the TF team to support and ‘turnaround’ the families identified as part of the TF initiative.
- 2.9 The methodology for working with individual families will be based on the ‘Team Around the Family’ approach. In practice this means introducing a Case Practitioner to the family who will work with them consistently over a six-month period. With the family, this worker develops a Family Plan, using the ‘Outcome star’ tool to provide a pathway for the family to address the issues that are affecting them, e.g. supporting the adults towards/into work or children back into mainstream schooling. This worker will also act as the family one-point-of-contact and a conduit for the other agencies to support the family achieve the aims in the Family Plan.
- 2.10 To enable us to identify and calculate the financial savings that this work will achieve, we will be using a Resource Calculator which has been provided by the DCLG. This will in the longer term begin to highlight the potential savings to the whole community of the programme.

- 2.11 In addition to the team based at the Civic centre funding for an additional targeted project will operate from the Phipps Bridge Estate. In order to meet the outcomes of the PRG Phipps Bridge the equivalent time of two Case Practitioners are be allocated to work with families from that area. Through the development of our work in that area, such as with Anti-Social Behaviour staff with the RSLs along with the focus of direct work in that area.
- 2.12 In addition to this staff group and as part of the PRG Phipps Bridge project, we have employed a Community Development Worker to provide a focus for community development (linked to the Transforming Families agenda) in the Phipps Bridge area. Pending the commissioning process to the Voluntary sector, of the Community Development Worker role, we negotiated with MVCS as an interim arrangement to ensure that this part of the programme got underway. We have made good progress with this arrangement where their efforts has provided the community development foundation for the future of this work. This includes the mapping of organisations, resources and key individuals in the Phipps Bridge area; identifying the people who live on the estate and are keen to work to improve it.
- 2.13 Following the completion of the Commissioning process in February, MVCS were appointed as the providers of the Community Development work and the management of the 'community fund'. This being an allocated fund from this PRG budget of £19,000 over three years to offer support to grassroots development and activities. They will work directly with and as part of the Transforming Families service and will assist in helping the TF team work in their support of families and meeting the targeted numbers. Discussions have taken place to plan the recruitment of the worker and the details of their role expectations and targets.
- 2.14 To enable our monitoring and evaluation, alongside the use of the Outcomes Star, we have adopted the Carefirst system currently used by Children's Social Care, to record and track our involvement with the families. As part of this we have developed a Families section on this database which will assist us to develop a whole family approach.
- 2.15 To also assist us to meet the Employment criteria and target, we have engaged with Job Centre Plus and local agencies to provide training leading to employment opportunities, this includes Merton Priory Homes new (PRG funded) training centre. We also are working with the Twin Training organisation, who are running the ESF funded employment programme in Merton. Whilst we will work to ensure training and education opportunities, we aim to achieve genuine employment opportunities.
- 2.16 The DCLG contributes £1.2m (40%) over three years for the programme. Merton Council contributes £1.9m (60%). The grant is secured on an annual pro rata basis when the target number of families have been reached. For 21012-13 this was 124. This number has already been achieved. An internal audit to ensure that we have indeed met the Troubled Families criteria will take

place. In 2013-14 the target will increase to 185 families and this will reduce in 2014-15 to 65.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

None

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1 Consultations have been undertaken within the Authority and with partner agencies, which also include Voluntary sector organisations. This has provided invaluable support in developing the service and the approach to the initiative.

5. TIMETABLE

N/A

6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial Resources as outlined in the report. The council is committed to fund 60% of the initiative, with central government funding 40%. Claims remain dependent on effectively meeting targets.

7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

None

8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

This covers all sections of the community and does not discriminate against any group.

9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

The initiative is intended to have a positive impact on crime and disorder in the borough.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

The main risks relate to financial risk of not meeting government targets. This risk is well managed at present.

11. APPENDICES

None

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

13. OFFICER CONTACTS

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Transforming Families Co-ordinator