

To the Chair and Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

Stronger Families Programme Update.

Relevant Member(s)	Cabinet	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor McGuinness	Chris	All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Committee will be provided with a presentation giving an update on the Expanded Stronger Families Programme to date.
2. In the current 'Expanded Programme' (AKA Phase2), we are asked to turn around 2950 families; this is a massive increase from the first phase programme and as such requires the buy in of all partner organisations.
3. We are currently working with over 700 families which is on track
4. The Expanded Programme is far more complicated than Phase 1 in that the criteria for eligibility has doubled and the process for claiming '*Payment by Results*' (PbR) is far more difficult as it is on an '*all or nothing*' basis.
5. Progress continues but it is slow in these first years of the programme; but this is not out of step with many other areas across the country.
6. Although our claim rate to date is low, there have been significant progression and positive outcomes for a large number of families
7. An action plan is in place to continue to embed the programme into service delivery and improve the progress of cases coming through services and partner agencies for claims.

EXEMPT REPORT

8. This is not an exempt report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. That the Committee:
 - i. Note the progress of the Expanded Stronger Families Programme to date (April 2015-October 2016).
 - ii. Comment on the current Proposals for improving the claim rates for the Expanded Programme.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

10. Doncaster Council and its partners are making real progress in developing comprehensive early help and family support based on the Stronger Families whole family ethos. As we know, families with multiple problems require a number of agencies to work with them to support them to change their behaviours and improve their lives; in the past this was often done in isolation to suit service delivery more than the families themselves. The Stronger Families Programme has shown that by improving the coordination of services around families and by embedding a whole family approach using a lead professional model, families can get to know an individual worker and build a working relationship with them. This allows for quicker improvements, reduced duplication and improved outcomes for families. Also the longer term nature of the required outcomes within the programme mean families sustain the improvements far more as they have the continued support of the worker.
11. Through phase 1 of the programme hundreds of families were supported to tackle deep rooted complex issues that have affected them often for years. Evidence and direct feedback from families in Phase 1 of the programme shows this lead professional model is strongly favoured. Families are able to get to know the lead professional who works with them to tackle the issues that are affecting their lives. This strong feedback from families recently formed the basis of Doncaster's evidence on the impact of the programme for the forthcoming Public Accounts Committee inquiry.
12. The Expanded Stronger Families Programme has a much wider scope which means we can reach and support many more families over the next few years. The programme has changed in that there is now a greater focus on understanding and reducing costs and driving service transformation to sustain the ways of working beyond the life of the programme. Stronger Families is closely aligned to the Early Help work currently being implemented in Doncaster.
13. Not delivering the programme effectively will have both financial and reputational impacts for Doncaster and the Council. The current issues relating to the difficulties in identifying families and then tracking them through to a claim appear on the surface to be cultural and process issues. Other areas are also struggling and this suggests some issues relate to the complexity of achieving an 'all or nothing' claim in the present programme.
14. We have identified and engaged a good number of families which gives us scope to improve our claims while we look to embed the Stronger Families practices into other services and partner agencies.

BACKGROUND

15. The National Troubled Families Programme began in April 2012 with the first phase ending March 2015. Across the country the Prime Minister vowed to 'turn around' 120,000 families within that parliament. Doncaster agreed to turn around 870 families within that period. To ensure this we had to work with over 1000 families and we actually turned around well over 900 families.

16. The programme has made a vast difference to hundreds of Doncaster families who often had a long history of being in and out of services. Families have been supported to gain employment or improve school attendance or stop any involvement in crime or ASB; however these are often symptoms of root causes such as poverty, mental health or emotional wellbeing issues and vulnerability. Families are encouraged to tackle the root causes of the issues as well as the symptoms and be full partners in the process. As such families felt listened to, active in their improvement and build their resilience for the future; thus reducing the need to access high cost services in the future. This feedback has formed the crux of Doncaster's feedback to the recent Public Accounts Committee inquiry into the Troubled Families Programme.
17. The success of the first phase of Stronger Families meant Doncaster was invited to participate in the Expanded Troubled Families Programme, running from April 2015 to March 2020. This Programme is centred on 6 headline family issues determined by Government, these are:
 1. Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.
 2. Children who have not been attending school regularly.
 3. Children who need help: children of all ages, who need help, are identified as in need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan.
 4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness.
 5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse.
 6. Parents and children with a range of health problems.
18. Recent media activity has portrayed a very negative picture of the National Programme which the Government have rebuked. A Public Accounts Committee met on the 19th October to review evidence of impact of the programme. Doncaster submitted a strong case to show how the programme locally has improved the lives of families.
19. The programme in Doncaster is driven by a senior level multi-agency Steering Group chaired by a Senior Manager in DCST, providing direction to the Head of Stronger Families and then reporting through to Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny and the Team Doncaster partnership boards as well as into partner governance structures.
20. To support delivery of the programme the Government provide a grant which is split into three elements:
 - A Service Transformation Grant to support the programme delivery including the provision of a Troubled Families coordinator (Head of Stronger Families), data analysts and the various support staff required to ensure the programme is delivered effectively.
 - Attachment Fees which are upfront payments to enable the programme to engage with families and provide interventions and initiatives that are required.
 - A reward or Payment by Results (PbR) payment which Doncaster can claim when families make significant progress against the issues identified during assessment.

21. The programme brings in much needed income into Doncaster through upfront fees and Payment by Results (PbR) which are used to directly support families, improve services and develop staff. The programme could be worth over £6,000,000 to Doncaster if all the potential reward funds are claimed. The budget is held by Doncaster Council but it is expected that this is used to deliver the programme via services and partners supporting the range of family levels as determined by the Government; from complex families either in social care or on the edge of social care, through to '*superlight*' families who are need of early help and low level support to prevent them escalating into more complex issues and costly services.
22. Families are getting support from services and partner agencies but they are not all working in a whole family way as set out by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in the Troubled Families Financial Framework. Families must have a lead worker, whole family assessment and a whole family action plan which must be linked to the Stronger Families outcomes plan to be considered as engaged on the programme. Family progress then needs to be tracked and recorded up to the required timescale (usually 6 months but at least one year for education attendance) and then when the outcomes has been met and sustained, evidence needs to be provided to allow Audit to check and verify the claim to go to Government for reward. This is a long and complicated process; but it is necessary.
23. This current programme has a greater focus on Service Transformation and work continues to support services to transform the way they work with whole families to enable this to happen. Enhanced actions are taking place to improve the draw through of families from identification to claim with the Children's Trust and Health colleagues in RDASH.
24. Despite the complexity of the programme we are making progress; in the first 18 months of the programme we have engaged with over 700 families in line with the national programme requirements. These families are all receiving support through a lead worker to help them improve their lives. We continue to see improvements across the issues families present with and these figures are reported each quarter to the Stronger Families Steering Group and into the Team Doncaster Boards.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

25. This programme is determined by Central Government guidelines and so there are limited options for delivery, however local areas have to develop an Outcomes Plan for their area under the 6 headline family issues set by the Government. This has been done in Doncaster collaboratively with Council services and partner organisations.
26. Doncaster has agreed through the Team Doncaster partnership that Stronger Families would be a programme of service change around whole families rather than setting up a new service. This approach takes more time as we move to embed a new way of working in services and partner; however this decision is now paying dividends as the Expanded Programme is focused on service transformation and cost savings while improving outcomes for families.

27. This continued focus on service change, whole family working and coordinated approach will help to ensure that Doncaster develops a sustainable approach to family support after the Troubled Families Programme ends in April 2020.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

28. This report allows the Board to comment on the progress to date of this Expanded Programme and ask questions relating to progress and future plans.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	<p>One of the headline issues for the programme is employment and supporting families to get into work or on a programme to work. We work closely with DWP who have seconded two employment advisors into the Programme.</p>
	<p>People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	<p>The Expanded Programme now has health as a headline indicator to help people live healthier lives and an indicator around financial inclusion to support families who experience financial difficulties. We work closely with health colleagues and others to improve support to families around health issues and finance and debt issues</p>
	<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	<p>The employment and progress to work indicators contribute to this priority, as does the crime and ASB theme. The basis of the programme locally is the Communities Area Teams who provide local coordination and support to families and other agencies out in communities as well as supporting communities to be more resilient.</p>
	<p>All families thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	<p>The whole programme is aimed at improving vital services and supporting families to thrive and build their resilience. This is about working with families to improve not doing to them.</p>

	Council services are modern and value for money.	The programme has a focus on cost savings through innovation, more coordination and whole family approaches.
	Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance.	The programme is a partnership programme lead by Doncaster Council.

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

29. The programme is agreed between the Chief Executive and Government via a written agreement. Failure to deliver will result in financial and reputational losses.
30. It is assumed that the new Prime Minister will continue to support the national Troubled Families Programme and ensure continuation of funding.
31. Lack of a whole family case management system is impacting on our ability to accurately track and monitor families through to claim

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

32. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 enables a Local Authority to do anything which an individual may generally do.
33. Any contracts entered into using this funding must be procured in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules and EU Procurement Regulations as appropriate.
34. Any external funding received must be used strictly in accordance with the requirements of the external funder.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

35. The latest estimate for Troubled Families Grant income for 2016/17 is £1.31m. This consists of £0.91m upfront Attachment Fee (£1000 per family to work with 909 families) and £0.25m for Service Transformation. The remainder is payment on results and an estimate of £0.15m is included in the latest Stronger Families Plan (£800 per family to deliver results for 191 families). It is anticipated that the remaining families will deliver results in later years of the programme.
36. The maximum grant income available to DMBC is £6.31m over the 5 year Phase 2 programme, of which £3.95m is guaranteed and £2.36m is dependent upon achievement of results. Although these figures appear to be high, it should be noted that the funding per family in phase 2 is only 45% of the amount that was received in Phase 1 but the average number of families to be worked with per annum has doubled, with 2950 families needing to be turned around over the 5 year period. An earmarked reserve

of £1.38m was created from underspends from Phase 1 specifically to pump prime the delivery of phase 2, as the fall in funding per family was anticipated, without this funding it is believed that outcomes for families will not be achieved. £0.20m was drawn down from the reserve in year 1 of Phase 2 to meet 16/17 expenditure levels.

37. A full 5 year expenditure plan has been produced by the Head of Service, based upon the receipt of the maximum level of income and the use of all the earmarked reserve. This plan reflects the requirement to spend more in years 2, 3 and 4 of the programme to develop capacity in order to implement the service transformation requirements of the programme. This 5 year plan is continually revised to take into account any changes to the delivery and will need to be updated in future to reflect the actual levels of payments by results income if it is different to the level anticipated. At this time the plan also includes a buffer of 12% of the reward payment which is considered prudent and provides a realistic budget within which to manage expenditure.
38. It should be noted that it is recommended by DCLG that DMBC turns around and claims reward for 447 families in 2016/17 but the plan is based around a more realistic 193. We have been advised that there is a risk that any unclaimed reward for the remaining families (254 families) may be lost and unable to claim in future years. This is a potential loss of circa £0.2m reward income which would impact in future years of the Phase 2 plan, but this has not been confirmed.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 39 Human Resources are aware of and support this programme, there are a number of posts specifically funded to carry out Troubled Families work and should the programme end there would be a number of posts at risk.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

40. As outlined above, there is a requirement for a whole family case management system to improve the ability of the Stronger Families Programme to accurately track and monitor families through to claim. Although the aim is to use the Early Help Module of Liquid Logic, it is understood that this does not currently report against while families. The Stronger Families requirements have been considered as part of an options appraisal for a potential Integrated People's Solution across Adults Health and Wellbeing (AHWB), Learning Opportunities Children and Young People (LOCYP), and Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST), the outcomes of which are being discussed at the Directors meeting on Monday 14 November. Depending upon the outcomes and timescales for this, it may be necessary for consideration to be given by the ICT Governance Board (IGB) for an interim solution for Stronger Families, in order to mitigate the associated risks to the Expanded Programme.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

41. An equalities impact assessment has been completed for the programme and is monitored and amended regularly as the programme develops. The headline criteria have been set by Government but the indicators within the

Outcomes Plan are open to local determination. There are positive impacts in that the programme aims to improve service delivery around whole families, avoid duplication and improve outcomes. Evidence from Phase 1 suggests this is happening. There are some implications on the characteristic of age in that the definition of a family requires the household to have one dependent child at least under the age of 18. There is no evidence to suggest that other characteristics are likely to be impacted negatively as families may also be characterised as having members with a range of protected characteristics.

CONSULTATION

42. The following consultation has been undertaken: -
- i. The Outcomes Plan has been developed and subsequently reviewed by a large number of partners and agreed by the Stronger Families Steering Group
 - ii. The amended Outcomes Plan has been shared with the Portfolio Holder for Communities.
 - iii. Internal Audit have been consulted and have contributed to the plan review and agreed it is suitable for the purpose of processing claims.
 - iv. The Troubled Families Unit has been consulted and has commented favourably on the Outcomes Plan.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

43. Troubled Families programme Financial Framework
Stronger Families Outcomes Plan.
Public Accounts Committee Evidence Submission.

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