



Oxfordshire Thriving Families Programme

Bulletin 1

The Troubled Families agenda is a Coalition Government initiative led by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). It is aimed at helping some of the most challenged and disadvantaged families living in local communities to turn their lives around. The aim of the national programme is to fight the problems of poverty, disadvantage and disconnection from the mainstream of society, which persist through generations and are experienced by a group of our most troubled and troubling families.

In Oxfordshire, the programme will be called Thriving Families, since this is what it aims to do – help some of our most disadvantaged families thrive. The Thriving Families Programme aims to make a real and lasting impact to the lives of some of the most vulnerable families in the county while reducing the impact on the public purse.

How will families in Oxfordshire be identified?

National criteria are:

- 1) Families which include one or more children under 18 with a proven offence in last 12 months and /or one or more member who has an antisocial behaviour order, behaviour injunction or housing related antisocial behaviour intervention in last 12 months
- 2) Families which include a child who has been permanently excluded or has more than three fixed term exclusions or is in pupil referral unit or alternative education or is off-roll and/ or is a persistent absentee.
- 3) Families which include an adult on benefits

Any family that meets all three national criteria will automatically be in the programme. We have an additional criterion in Oxfordshire because we believe that this enables us to address the root causes of families' failure to thrive:

- 4) Families which present a high cost to services e.g. frequent police call outs, child protection issues

In Oxfordshire, **810** 'troubled' families have been identified.



Aims of the programme

The key aims of the programme are:

- Get adults into work
- Get children into school
- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce costs to the public purse over time

We are being asked to work particularly with families where worklessness, crime or anti-social behaviour and truancy are all present.

Funding

The Government estimates that it spends £9 billion per year on 120,000 troubled families – a cost of £10,000 per family. £8 billion of this is spent reacting to problems rather than solving them. The Government is making available up to £4,000 per family to turn this situation around through a payments by results scheme. The payment comes in two parts, an initial 'attachment fee' for each family worked with, followed by a 'results payment' for achieving demonstrable success.

This constitutes 40% of the funding required, Oxfordshire County Council and our local partners will make up the rest of the investment. Oxfordshire County Council has confirmed £800,000 funding for the Thriving Families Programme for 2012/13 and again for 2013/14.

Worklessness programme

There is a clear Government expectation that the worklessness programme (commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions with European Social Fund money) is aligned fully with this work, because getting parents into work is a key part of the agenda. They expect that local areas will work closely with providers to make sure an approach for troubled families all fits together.

How will this programme benefit Oxfordshire?

This programme is expected to benefit Oxfordshire's people in a number of ways. The families themselves will benefit from improved life chances while substantial savings are expected in the provision of public services. These benefits are outlined below:

- Savings will be made through more efficient use of public services
- Families will be admitted to the programme based on need wherever they live, so the whole of the county will benefit
- Some of the resources in the programme will be used to fund high quality research into finding out which interventions really work locally, equipping Oxfordshire with an array of proven interventions that can be used with confidence by all services in the future
- The programme will help to reduce the number of families on the threshold of social care
- It will add capacity to community and neighbourhood groups and help to develop innovative working in local neighbourhoods

What's happening in Oxfordshire?

- We have appointed our Thriving Families Programme Manager, Lorna Caldicott, who will coordinate work in Oxfordshire
- We are in the process of identifying our 810 families
- A strategic group has been established and is meeting monthly to oversee the Thriving Families Programme and make sure it has the right links with the right existing groups
- We are developing our operational approach to working with this number of families at this level
- We are making the business case for local investment
- We have appointed Alison Wharmby as the Service Manager
- We are in the final stages of appointing the team, who will work from the Early Intervention Hubs across the county

What's going into the business case?

- Who the families are who we'll be working with
- How are we going to configure the 60% local resource
- What our interventions are going to be and how they are going to save costs
- How we're going to allocate the work across the 3 years
- Confirmation of commitment and sign-up from politicians and partners



This is an important central government initiated agenda which will be challenging but which also holds considerable potential for supporting better some of the most troubled families in the county. We are committed to managing this programme within the wider context of what is right for Oxfordshire, its families and its communities. We are also committed to ensuring that we should not lose sight of early intervention and support which can prevent more families becoming very 'troubled' in the future.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about the Oxfordshire Thriving Families Programme, please email thriving.families@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

