

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

6 July 2021

Subject: Supporting Families Programme

Cabinet Member: Councillor Laura Mayes, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

Executive Summary

The Supporting Families (previously Troubled Families) Programme was developed to radically transform the lives of the country's most challenging families with multiple issues. The aim is for families to make Sustained Significant Progress so that they do not need support from specialist statutory services. Wiltshire has a Payment by Results target to successfully support 347 families this year.

Purpose of Report

1. This report outlines the work undertaken to meet the outcomes of the Supporting Families Programme.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The programme is relevant to the following priorities and objectives laid down within the Council's Business Plan:
 - Safe Communities
 - Reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Improved support for those with Mental Health or Learning Disabilities support into employment
 - A workforce with the right skills to ensure we keep unemployment figures below the national average
 - Proactive Early Help and Children's Centres' services
 - Improved support for those with Mental Health or Learning Disabilities

As it is a cross partnership programme it also meets outcomes for the Police and Crime Plan:

- Protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm
- Ensure those in mental health crisis get the help they need
- Preventing offenders from reoffending
- Tackle domestic abuse and sexual offences

Background

3. The programme was initially aimed at the most challenging families with multiple needs and was named 'Troubled Families'. The negative connotations of this name have been recognised and it has never been used directly in Wiltshire to identify the families. The Government recognised this issue and the programme was renamed 'Supporting Families' in 2021 with a focus on supporting families earlier so that they do not require the more costly specialist services.
4. For a family to be part of the Supporting Families Programme they must meet the criteria for at least two of the following indicators:
 - Parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.
 - Children who have not been attending school regularly.
 - Children who need help: children of all ages, who need help, are identified as in need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan.
 - Adults are out of work or at risk of financial exclusion, or young people are at risk of worklessness.
 - Families affected by domestic violence and abuse.
 - Parents and children with a range of health problems.
5. Every family should have an identified Key Worker and a Family Plan so that activities can be co-ordinated and paperwork reduced.
6. The funding for the programme comes in two parts – Service Transformation funding which is a fixed amount, and a Payment by Results element which is reliant on families making positive progress. To successfully make a claim every child in a family will need to have achieved at least 90% school attendance.

There are two ways to make a claim:

- A family has achieved significant and sustained progress, compared with all their areas of concern at the point of engagement, or
- An adult in the family has moved off benefits and into continuous employment.

Supporting Families in Wiltshire

7. Wiltshire has been very successful since the programme's inception in 2012, and we have achieved 100% success rate, making successful claims for a grand total of 2833 families. This means that positive outcomes have been delivered for all 2833 families as outlined above, improving the life chances and opportunities of the children and families involved.

Phase and year ending	Target No. of Families	No of Families Claimed
First Phase 2012 - 2015	510	510
Second Phase 2016 - 2020	1990	1990
Second Phase Extension 2021	333	333
Extension 2022	347	90 (so far)
Total	3180	2833

8. Each family will be included in the programme by meeting at least 2 of the indicators listed below. There have been a total of 6,306 positive improvements for families and children across the entire programme, and each indicator is measured below.

Outcomes by indicator:

Financial Year	Indicator 1 crime	Indicator 2 School attendance	Indicator 3 Children who need help	Indicator 4 Employment	Indicator 5 Domestic Abuse	Indicator 6 Physical and Mental Health
2015/16	4	9	13	9	5	5
2016/17	33	119	246	177	104	121
2017/18	22	72	160	102	81	96
2018/19	37	121	656	159	325	458
2019/20	46	154	848	142	484	516
2020/21	12	39	273	40	188	201
2021/22	7	12	71	18	53	68
Total	161	526	2267	647	1240	1465

9. Most families who are a part of the programme are engaged with the Support and Safeguarding Service or the children’s centres so will generally meet the criteria for indicator 3 (children who need help) (n.2267). The next most successful claim is 6 (n.1465), which is for families who have adults or children with mental health issues, drug and alcohol problems, or poorly managed medical conditions (e.g. diabetes). Indicator 5 shows the positive progress that has been made in relation to Domestic Violence, with 1,240 families seeing an improvement.
10. As well as being employed full time for at least six months, Indicator 4, Employment progress, includes parents who are volunteering or undertaking training to enable them to return to work, as well as children who are no longer ‘Not in Education, Employment or Training’ (NEET).
11. Families are identified through close working with the Support and Safeguarding Service (SASS) and children’s centre services.
12. The Department for Work and Pensions fund two Employment Advisers who are co-located with Wiltshire Council who support parents to return to work, or progress to work through volunteering and work preparation courses (see below on impact of COVID on this offer).
13. The funding from the programme is used for a variety of activities to improve outcomes for families including:

- Family Group Conferencing
- Splitz (domestic abuse support)
- Parenting courses
- 2x Education Support Workers (helping children to increase school attendance)
- Vulnerable Adolescent Exploitation Worker
- Get Connected (supporting SEND Young People with independence)
- Navigator role in MASH (increasing community support and parental independence)
- Police Data Officer (provide information and data for police related claims)
- Support for Wiltshire Race Equality Council

14. The co-ordination of the programme is held in the Families and Children's Commissioning team, and the success of the programme is due to a range of factors. These include partnership working, the relentless focus on gathering and recording the claims where success is evident, a commitment from the leadership in the Council to prioritise the evidence gathering, and good quality work with families across a range of services.

15. Quarterly feedback of progress is provided to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) who are responsible for the programme, and regular audits are carried out by the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) to ensure that claims are valid, and meet the criteria of the programme.

16. Appendix A is the Families Outcome Plan, which is produced for Central Government to demonstrate how Wiltshire Council will assess outcomes in 2020/21 to ensure that there is national compliance with the updated Financial Framework. This is the latest version of the document, which is updated as the programme changes. It is expected that the programme will change next year (2022 / 23) as indicated by Central Government.

COVID-19

17. COVID-19 has produced challenges to working with families. This has been managed remotely and then more face to face meetings have been introduced, including doorstep visits. We have maintained successful outcomes through out the pandemic, but it is acknowledged that more families will need support around the residual issues of prolonged lockdown.

18. As schools were closed for part of 2020 and 2021 achieving and evidencing at least 90% attendance at school was not possible. Measures which reflected attendance of home learning were in place as well, to ensure that claims could still be made and that children were getting a meaningful education. Therefore this helped to meet the positive outcome measure of school attendance for these children.

19. The volatility of the job market during COVID-19 presented challenges with work opportunities and volunteering. This has meant that fewer successful Continuous Employment claims are possible. The Employment Advisers continued to work with parents to prepare them for work.

20. The Employment Advisers were originally employed full time and were redeployed back to the Job Centre for 6 months during COVID. In September 2020 they have returned on only 2 days per week, therefore reducing their capacity to work with families. We are continuing to speak to the DWP regarding the return of the advisors on a full-time basis.

Financial Considerations

21. Every time a claim for Payment by Results is made, the cases are audited against the Financial Framework produced by the national Supporting Families team at MHCLG. The table below shows the available funding for 2021 / 22 which is similar to previous years.

Available Supporting Families Funding	2016/2020 (Average)	2020/21	2021/22
Service Transformation Funding - funding for providing intensive family support services and increasing the maturity of the Early Help system	£200,000	£400,000	£599,000
Attachment Fees	£398,000	£200,000	£0*
Payment by Results (347 families)	£318,400	£266,400	£277,600
Total	£916,400	£866,400	£876,600

*(changed due to COVID, and included in service transformation for 21/22)

Conclusions

22. Wiltshire continues to have a successful Supporting Families Programme and families are accessing support in a timely way.

23. The successful Payment by Results (PbR) outcomes for families enable a variety of support packages to be provided for families to prevent them from requiring more costly specialist services.

24. Continued cross partnership working with the police and other partners ensure a joined-up package of support for families.

**Lucy-Anne Bryant (Supporting Families Co-ordinator)
Commissioning Programme Lead**

Appendix A : Families Outcome Plan