Communities and neighbourhoods

Troubled Families programme Q&A

How the Troubled Families programme will work

How will the new Troubled Families programme work?

Local authorities in England are given an indicative number of troubled families in their area. The local authority is then tasked with identifying families that meet the criteria for the programme. These criteria are that families:

- are involved in youth crime or anti-social behaviour
- have children who are regularly truanting or not in school
- have an adult on out of work benefits
- cause high costs to the public purse.

The criteria include a large degree of local discretion so that councils can target the programme at the families in their area that they know need it most.

The Government is also funding a national network of troubled family co-ordinators in each upper-tier local authority. The co-ordinators will operate at a senior level to oversee the programme of action in their area.

More details about what the co-ordinators will do can be found in 'The Troubled Families programme: Financial framework for the payment-by-results scheme for local authorities' (see related links, right).

What does turning around troubled families mean?

For the local authority to receive £3,900 per family from central government (in 2012-13) the family must have demonstrated:

- more than 85 per cent attendance in schools and fewer than three exclusions from school
- a 60 per cent reduction in anti-social behaviour across the whole family
- a 33 per cent reduction in youth offending.
In addition:

progress towards work such as enrolment in the Work Programme or the European Social Fund provision for troubled families, would equal another £100 per family to the local authority (in 2012-13).

Alternatively, to receive £4,000 per family to the local authority (in 2012-13) there must be:

one adult in the family moving off benefits and into work for at least three months.

More details about the scheme will work can be found in 'The Troubled Families programme: Financial framework for the payment-by-results scheme for local authorities' (see related links, below).

How will this intervention work be done?

The Government is not instructing local authorities to do this work in one particular way. However the programme will be based on proven intervention techniques such as Family Intervention Projects that deliver similar results. Common features of this kind of work include:

- an intense whole family approach, rather than dealing with family members individually
- a single key worker or small team being assigned as the main point of delivery of services for each family
- different agencies such as the police, social services, schools and health visitors working together with a single plan rather than on their own.

Examples of this kind of work can be found by downloading the case studies below.

What money will be made available for turning families around?

The Prime Minister has made available £448 million over three years from 2012 to 2015, drawn from the budgets of six government departments. This represents 40 per cent of the average cost of turning 120,000 families around using proven intervention techniques, with the remaining 60 per cent coming from local budgets. Central government is also meeting the full cost of employing a troubled families co-ordinator in every upper-tier local authority.

Central government's contribution is made up of up-front fees and results payments, the balance of which shifts over the course of the three years of the programme. Much of the remaining estimated 60 per cent investment required to deliver this programme will be drawn from reprioritising some of the money which is already being spent by local services on reacting to troubled families' problems, rather than seeking to solve and prevent them.
Related publications

The Troubled Families programme: Financial framework for the payment-by-results scheme for local authorities

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