

SCRUTINY REPORT

Date: 7th October 2019

Subject:	Troubled Families Programme overview
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Position:	Head of Service
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1 Executive summary

- 1.1 The Troubled Families Programme has been delivered in Merton since 2012 with the current phase delivered since 2015 and due to end March 2020.
- 1.2 In March 2019 a funding report with data summary and case study portfolio was presented to the Children, Schools and Families DMT because the direct delivery team (locally named Transforming Families) is funded by the Troubled Families grant and payments.
- 1.3 The team was also forecasting an overspend in the final year due to the upfront fees being significantly less than previous years.
- 1.4 Various options were provided to the Children, Schools and Families DMT and a decision was made to include the Transforming Families direct team and parenting officer in an Early Help reorganisation together with two other family support teams (0-5 Supporting Families and Bond Road Family Team. The consultation for the reorganisation was launched on 18th July 2019
- 1.5 Merton's Safeguarding Partnership has their first priority as Early Help and the implementation plan includes clarified referral pathways, unified assessment processes and tools. The reorganisation will support this priority. .
- 1.6 The Government spending review in September 2019 announced a one year extension to the Troubled Families programme (from April 2020 to March 2021).
- 1.7 The details of this extension are not yet known and the Troubled Families team within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has sent a letter to Merton Council stating that they are awaiting confirmation from Ministers.
- 1.8 This paper sets out the funding and outcomes for both the direct team and the overall programme.

2 Details

2.1 The national programme provides funding for achievement of 'significant and sustained progress' (SSP) or continuous employment of each family 'turned around'. If there are multiple members in the family presenting with needs against the criteria then a 'turn around' requires all needs to be addressed.

2.2 The six eligibility criteria are:

- crime and antisocial behaviour
- poor health;
- domestic violence and abuse;
- children in need;
- poor school attendance;
- adult unemployment

2.3 Troubled Families Grant Payments

2.4 Payments are made to local authorities in two parts:

- Up front attachment fee (£1000 per family) based on a target number of families identified at the start of the programme. In Merton the target number is 1,150, with the final attachment fee paid by the MHCLG in March 2019.
- Payment by Result (PbR) of achieving significant and sustained progress (£800 per family).

2.5 Every year a Grant is also paid to cover co-ordination of the programme at £150,000 per annum.

2.6 Merton's claims against the Troubled Families programme

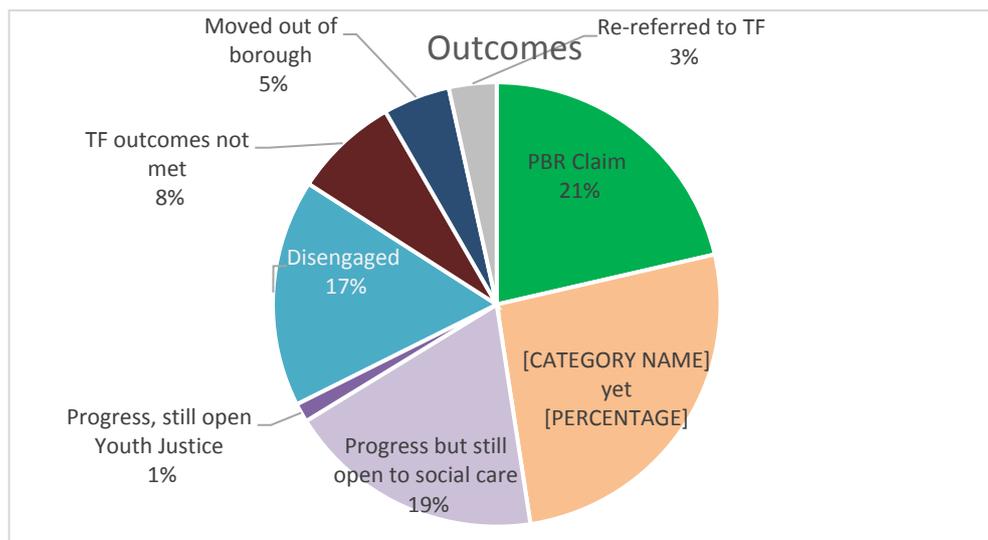
2.7 Claims for payments can be for results achieved with families who worked directly with the Transforming Families team and also a range of teams within the partnership that have delivered against the criteria (as long as there is a key worker and family plan to meet the priority criteria).

2.8 *Claims from the total Troubled Families Programme:*

2.9 For the first three years of the programme and as of the end of March 2018, Merton had claimed payment by results for 434 families having sustained progress (an average of 145 claims per year).

2.10 In 2018/19 Merton had a target of 200 families. The total claim fell short by 9 families with a claim of 191 families that year. This resulted in a 64% conversion rate against the total target of 1,150 families at that point in the programme.

- 2.11 While there were still 525 families from the original 1,150 target that could be claimed against (£420k) in the final year of the programme, the target for 2019/20 is 200 families (50 families per quarter).
- 2.12 This is deemed an ambitious target and in Quarter 1 a claim of 36 families was submitted, although the final quarter is traditionally the highest claim period.
- 2.13 Merton therefore has a total of 661 families claimed, a 57% conversion rate, as of June 2019 with three further quarters to claim against.
- 2.14 *Claims from the Transforming Families Direct team:*
- 2.15 A data summary report was prepared for DMT and outlines 3 years of performance by the Transforming Families Team between 2016/17 - 2018/19.
- 2.16 This outlines that 268 families were referred, primarily from Social Care. Of those referred, 200 families were accepted, involving 745 individuals (with a mean age of the primary referred child being 14 years). The highest presenting needs were poor health, poor school attendance and children in need
- 2.17 Of those closed to the team (145) the majority had made progress towards their outcomes but only 21% (n31) were to the level of achieving a 'payment by result' claim (as outlined in the table below).



2.18 **Funding received**

2.19 For the first three years of the programme Merton received an average of £571,000 per annum, which paid for staffing and on costs for the Transforming Families direct team.

2.20 TF Funding paid between April 2015 and March 2018:

Attachment fees	£1,000	per family	917	£917,000
Transformation Grant	£150,000	per year	3	£450,000
Families 'turned around'	£800	per family	434	£347,200
			Total	£1,714,200

2.21 The payment for 2018/19 was less due to a reduced attachment fee (£176k compared to an average of £305k), resulting in an over spend for that year.

2.22 TF Funding for the financial year 2018/19:

Paid for 2018/19				
Attachment fees	£1,000	per family	176	£176,000
Transformation Grant	£150,000	per year	paid May	£150,000
Claims	£800	per family	191	£152,800
Total				£478,800

2.23 In 2019/20 the attachment fee was even less with only 57 families remaining from the identified target of 1,150 for engagement.

2.24 The Transformation Grant was also less at £115,200 (compared to £150k). The reason for this is not known, except that this is the final year of the programme.

2.25 The target for claims in 2019/20 is 200 families (£160,000).

Anticipated 19/20				
Target claims 19/20	£800	per family	200	£160,000
Attachment fee	£1,000	per family	57	£57,000
Transformation grant	£150,000	per year	1	£150,000
Total				£367,000

2.26 Even if the target of 200 claims is achieved this results in a shortfall of £198,000 for 2019/20 compared to the usual annual income funding the team.

2.27 All of the staff in the team are permanently employed and some have been with the team since it was established. Therefore decisions were required not only for the end of the programme but particularly within the final year of the programme.

2.28 Long term options

2.29 Options were considered in regard to redirection of commissioned funds, a reorganisation of early help services, council investment or closing the service with redeployment across services or redundancy. These are summarised below.

- Option 1: the diversion of commissioning funds for the Risk and Resilience Service to be brought in-house alongside a restructure and locally set service criteria/targets so the successful staff from the Transforming Families Team and Catch22 could deliver holistic and specialist adolescent services alongside the other teams within the Adolescent and Family Service. This was not supported due to commitments and approvals already made by senior management and the TUPE rights of Catch22.
- Option 2: restructure Early Help services into one service framework with new job descriptions and competitive interview process. If started quickly, utilising recent reviews and the work of the task and finish group, this could be concluded before the funding ends. A full staff consultation and stakeholder engagement process was proposed. This would still result in some redundancies but following a competitive interview process.
- Option 3: close the service and start the process of consultation and redundancy of eight Transforming Families staff. This option was not supported.

2.30 To support the decision the following documents were made available to DMT:

- Data report in regard to the number of referrals received by the Transforming Families direct team (approx. 100 families / 300 individuals per year) and the outcomes achieved (67% achieved progress, 21% were PbR claims).
- Portfolio of 13 case studies where significant progress was made, including those that did not quite meet PbR claim criteria but resulted in positive outcomes, as highlighted by statements from families and young people.

2.31 **Next steps**

2.32 The decision was for Option 2, a restructure of Early Help services, which was launched on 18th July 2019. The response and final structure is due to be confirmed on 7th November 2019, dependent on consultation feedback and re-evaluation of job descriptions

2.33 The restructure has allowed staff within the direct delivery team to consider redeployment options, with three staff taking up opportunities, which reduces the risk of redundancy and the loss of skills and experience from the team within Merton's services. It is hoped that the remaining staff will secure positions within the new Family Wellbeing Service.

2.34 Decisions are still required in regard to how the final year will be co-ordinated but the data from performance shows that Payment by Results are not reliant on the Transforming Families direct team but will be supported by the continued employment of an experienced data manager that understands the programme.

3 **Appendices**

- TF Data Summary
- TF Case Study Portfolio

4 **Background papers**

None

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