



PRCC.35 12/13

Committee  
Prosperous Communities  
Committee

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**Subject: Families Working Together**

Report by:

Director of Communities and Localism

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**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**West Lindsey District Council endorses the Families Working Together approach for Lincolnshire**

**Members support the secondment of an officer for two years to Lincolnshire County Council as part of the Families Working Together team.**

## IMPLICATIONS

### Legal:

The Families Working Together model has been developed within Lincolnshire County Council within a full and comprehensive legal context. There are no specific legal implications for West Lindsey District Council.

### Financial : (FIN/5)

The Council will receive the full costs associated with the officer post being considered for secondment including on-costs for the 2 year period of the project. Budgets will need to be established to reflect the costs and income associated with the secondment, but there will be no financial implications for West Lindsey District Council.

### Staffing :

One member of staff will be formally seconded from WLDC to the FWT team for a period of 2 years. This officer has been fully consulted and is positive about the opportunity the secondment presents. The replacement for the substantive post will be recruited on a 2 year contract basis.

Two officers in the Home Options team currently funded via a Supporting People contract until March 2014 will be 'ear marked ' into the FWT team and will receive full support for any cases they undertake which meets the FWT criteria . These staff have been fully consulted and this proposal offers additional opportunity to support their roles and achieve positive outcomes. .

### Equality and Diversity including Human Rights

The Families Working Together project is targeted specifically to families that meet the Government's criteria for eligibility as outlined in the report. These families will contain members who represent the full spectrum of diversity in our communities. It will be important that close case management and oversight is maintained for all families subject to support to ensure there is no unintended discrimination on any diversity grounds. Given that the project will be managed directly by Lincolnshire County Council the council is confident that robust policies and processes are in place to safeguard against these risks.

### Risk Assessment :

### Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Wherever possible please provide a hyperlink to the background paper/s  
If a document is confidential and not for public viewing it should not be listed.

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules applies?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

**Yes**

**No**

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

**Yes**

**No**

## **Executive Summary**

The Council has a strong track record of supporting multi- agency working to tackle the challenges raised by our most chaotic and troubled families, which have traditionally involved the participation of a range of different agencies at considerable cost and minimal sustainable outcomes . To this end WLDC originally established a Family Intervention Service in 2009 and has been an integral part of the developing the new model championed by central government in 2011.

The county Families Working Together project which evolved from the earlier model and which has been financially supported by WLDC since 2011 has been taking into account the changes required by central government over the last 6 months since Louise Casey was appointed as the National Lead for the Troubled Families Unit by the Prime Minister. A new set of criteria, funding arrangements and working practices written by central government have been required to be incorporated into the Lincolnshire model. To this end a Steering Group led by Lincolnshire County Council but with the active participation of West Lindsey District Council has established a new service specification and renewed partnership arrangements to address DCLG expectations.

These new arrangements include a county wide multi agency team co-located in each locality and a key worker approach to deal with the most difficult families which include family members with significant criminal or anti-social behaviour, children truanting from school and /or in receipt of welfare benefits.

As a result WLDC will house a local team, will second one officer to work directly, and identify two officers from the 'Housing Options 'service to work closely with the team to join up the necessary intervention to support the 'turning around' of some of our most challenging local families.

This multi-agency, coordinated and intensive approach will create significant efficiency among all the public services currently working with these individuals and will hopefully bring about real and sustainable change in the functioning of these families to their greater good and that of the wider communities in which they live. Reductions over time in anti-social behaviour, crime and security of housing will all deliver cost reductions to the council in staff time and other resources. Strong relationships between social services, health, the police, housing officers and benefit agencies will only enhance West Lindsey's role in enabling all of our citizens to participate fully in the life of their communities and to reach their full potential. There are no financial costs to West Lindsey to participate fully in the project but real tangible benefits for our communities.

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 In Lincolnshire there is a history of multi-agency work to support our most 'troubled' families which was initiated by West Lindsey District Council in 2009 as the Family Intervention Project – latterly the Family Intervention Service ( FIS) and which covered the areas of Lincoln City and Boston as well as West Lindsey district.
- 1.2 The FIS was fully funded by Government for two years and was a partnership between the District Councils as above, the Social Housing landlords operating in these localities ,Lincolnshire County Council Children's' Services and Lincolnshire Police.
- 1.3 In 2010 with the change of Government this funding ceased and instead a Community Budget approach was introduced which was required to be led by the County Council. This model built on the FIS but was widened to cover the whole of Lincolnshire and all staff transferred to the County Council. Partners were asked to jointly fund the project and approximately £1 million was raised in Lincolnshire, largely from the County Council and the Community Safety Partnership but also with contributions from some of the District Councils and other partners. West Lindsey District Council funded the project at a level of £20,000 a year for two years.
- 1.4 The project as outlined above was only funded for a further two years and would have required a fundamental review around its success and potential future funding in 2012/13.
- 1.5 Over the last two years the FWT project has continued to support troubled families from across the county very much in the same way as the previous FIS did taking referrals from WLDC and other partners. The model is based on a key worker working closely with a family to support all members in a coordinated way to achieve reductions in anti-social behaviour, truancy and child protection, criminal behaviour, supporting parents to access training and employment and safeguarding tenancies by avoiding eviction. The Key Worker coordinates all of the other agencies who might need to be involved with the family thus reducing inefficiency and improving outcomes.

## **2 Troubled Families National Policy**

- 2.1 After the riots of the summer in 2011 the Prime Minister made an announcement about a different way of supporting the country's most troubled families. Contained within this announcement was a commitment that by 2015 the Government pledged 'to turn around 120,000 troubled families' across the country. Since this time the Government has developed a policy with the aim of improving outcomes for troubled families and to reduce their cost to the public purse (estimated at £75,000 per annum per troubled family )
- 2.2 A Troubled Families Unit was created led by Louise Casey at the Department of Communities and Local Government and subsequently detailed guidance was issued to all first tier authorities explaining what was required.

- 2.3 In summary the Community Budget approach was superseded by Troubled Families and a new system of 'payments by results' introduced which requires a fundamental change in the way we deal with these families.

To achieve this:

- Local areas are required to identify a list of troubled families and must ensure families on the list receive adequate support to turn their lives around.
- The Troubled Families Unit has informed LCC that there are approximately 1,370 troubled families in Lincolnshire.
- The Government has set precise characteristics by which these families must be identified – see Appendix.
- In year one Lincolnshire are required to work with 457 troubled families.
- The Government expects local partners to pick up 60% of the cost of supporting these families and will contribute the 40% on Payments by Results basis.
- The Payment by Results approach is tapered with 80% of the 40% paid upfront in Year 1 with 20% only paid when results are achieved, falling to 20% upfront in Year 3 with 80% only paid when results are achieved
- The Government expects families to be 'turned around' within one year and there are clear criteria to assess whether positive outcomes have been achieved.

### **3 Implications for West Lindsey**

- 3.1 Given the Council's history of commitment and involvement in the various different stages of integrated support for families the Director of Communities and Localism at West Lindsey District Council was elected as chair of the Lincolnshire Steering Group in 2011. This has been helpful in ensuring that the perspectives of district and borough councils are central to the development of the Troubled Families model in Lincolnshire.
- 3.2 Lincolnshire County Council as the Children's Services authority is rightly taking the lead in developing and managing the model for the county and is the lead partner. However a range of other agencies are actively engaged and approach being developed is a truly partnership one.
- 3.3 District Councils and other partners are being asked to identify any staff who may benefit from being seconded or 'ear marked' into the Families Working Together team.
- 3.4 The seconded model is relatively straightforward with the member of staff transferring directly into the team for a period of two years. The County Council has agreed to cover the full costs to West Lindsey of seconding an officer for the

- 3.5 The 'ear marked' model is slightly different in that the officer may already be working on occasion with families who qualify for the Troubled Families support in their existing roles, however this will not be a regular or frequent occurrence. As such they will be identified as an adjunct to the Families Working Together team, will be included in team briefings and have access to family budgets when they are working with an identified family.
- 3.6 For WLDC one officer has been identified as a potential secondee, from the Localism Team where they have been responsible for community safety and tackling anti-social behaviour. These skills will be central to the FWT model and the officer has a significant length of experience to offer to the team. Two officers working as part of a Supporting People contract in the Home Options team will in addition be 'ear marked' to the FWT team and will access full support from the team when they are dealing with a family which meet the criteria. This arrangement will considerably improve the coordination between the work carried out to sustain tenancies and to provide a fully joined up service to some of most challenging families across the district.
- 3.7 Given West Lindsey District Council's role as a pilot authority for the new Universal Credit initiative for welfare it will be possible for other officers across the council to also share information and work collectively to support the families identified.
- 3.8 Over the last six months a service specification has been in development of families which is appended as an Appendix.

#### **4 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The Council has long recognised the value and efficiency in supporting our most challenging families by working together across the public services to coordinate the work of a variety of agencies to set families on the path to sustainable and productive lives. The new approach which builds on the work pioneered at West Lindsey in 2009 signals the next step in this journey and an opportunity to turn around the futures of many of our most 'challenging' families and at the same time reducing the overall cost of supporting these families to the public purse.

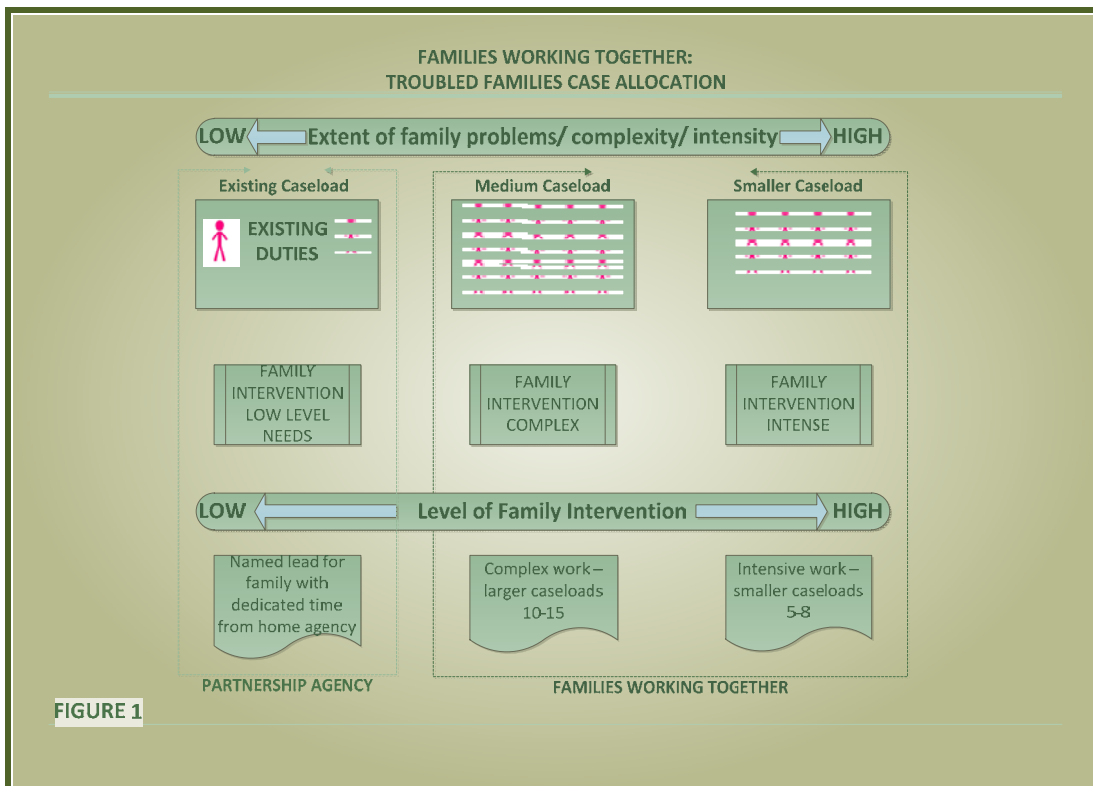
**Service Specification**

Families Working Together is a multi-agency service which specialises in the provision of targeted intervention whilst simultaneously encouraging and facilitating access to universal services. It aims to empower families to overcome the issues they may face and find sustainable solutions to their problems. The support is designed to enable families to fully participate in and contribute to their local communities.

In essence, Families Working Together is about transformational change. This is not simply in terms of the impact it is designed to effect on families as indicated above. It is also with regards to how the partners involved in delivering the service work with such families to reduce overall expenditure.

This means changing the way that we work with families. It entails pooling resources, not just budgets, in integrated, co-located teams across the county under a dedicated management team to ensure co-operation and eliminate duplication. It involves sharing not only the risks but also the rewards.

Families Working Together will therefore include staff in substantive posts as well as those seconded to the project from a range of different agencies involved in the partnership. One of the aims of the project will be to evidence that service redesign in such a manner is the most effective way of working with families with complex needs.





Families Working Together will work with those families with the most complex and intense needs, and co-ordinate services for those with low level needs in conjunction with existing partners involved with the families as shown in Figure 1 above.

Under the Families Working Together umbrella, this approach places families at the centre of an intensive, focussed intervention built around support from a Key Worker. In exhibiting and deploying the Principles outlined in Section 2 above, the Key Worker is responsible for co-ordinating services to the family and agreeing with them a realistic plan of action leading to long-term, sustainable solutions to the issues they face.

Key Workers are deemed to be the essential link to help families achieve desired outcomes.

Further to the success of a network of Family Intervention Projects and Community Budget pilots, central government has decided to adopt a similar methodology to tackle what they have termed 'Troubled Families'.

The Prime Minister has set local authorities the goal of 'turning around' the lives of 120,000 troubled families over the next three years<sup>1</sup> across the UK through the Troubled Families Unit within DCLG.

A 'troubled family' is defined as a household which:

- Is involved in crime or anti-social behaviour; AND/OR
- Has children not in school; AND/OR
- Has an adult on out-of-work benefits; AND/OR
- Causes high cost to the public purse.

Families Working Together is Lincolnshire's designated response to the Troubled Families programme. The service will work with families to minimise the likelihood and the impact of the risk factors associated with troubled families. By establishing positive relationships with families and developing their skills and resilience, Families Working

Together will seek to:

- Reduce the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Reduce non-attendance of children at school;
- Reduce worklessness of adults within families;
- Reduce the associated costs to the public purse.

There is recognition at both national and local governmental level that the defining feature of family intervention is a focus on family functioning. At a deeper level therefore, the aims of Families Working Together are:

- To provide individual and family group support that builds resilience and promotes personal and social development
- To provide family support services that promote healthy family relationships and prevent family breakdown
- To ensure that families are consistently supported to care for their children and enable them to grow to reach their full potential

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<sup>1</sup> [The Troubled Families programme: Financial framework for the payment-by-results scheme for local authorities](#)

- To empower and advocate for families to enable them to access the full range of services available to them
- To coordinate and work with a range of services and support agencies to engage with families to meet their needs in a planned and effective manner
- To empower families to contribute to and participate fully in their local communities
- To minimise the likelihood and impact of poor outcomes for families through working with a range of partners

To achieve these aims, Families Working Together will:

- Strengthen the influence of families in their relations with agencies and enhance their ability to bring about long-lasting, positive change
- Work with families to build a clear picture of their needs and agree a plan of action to meet those needs and generate positive outcomes
- Commission and engage additional help on behalf of families through its resources and links with other agencies
- Offer a personalised package of support to families tailored to meet their needs, including opportunities for learning and development
- Use a 'twin track approach' - highlighting the benefits of change and raising awareness of sanctions to support the family to achieve their goals
- Provide support for vulnerable children and adults to overcome the issues they may face at home or in the community
- Support eligible families at the earliest opportunity to identify and address difficulties as soon as possible, preventing escalation