Tackling troubled families
Date: 15 December 2011

Headlines

- The Government has announced that almost £450 million has been made available in a cross-government drive to turn around the lives of 120,000 troubled families.
- The money is being made available to local authorities to fund a national network of Troubled Family ‘Trouble-Shooters’ and family intervention projects. The trouble-shooters will oversee the programme of action in their area.
- A new Troubled Families Team based within the Department for Communities and Local Government, headed by Louise Casey, has been established to join up efforts across Whitehall, provide expert help to local areas and drive forward the strategy.
- It is estimated that troubled families cost the taxpayer an estimated £9 billion per year, equivalent to £75,000 per family.
- The issues are complex and there are no quick fixes but it is right that every effort is made to ensure support is targeted at those most in need.

LGA Key Messages

- Councils have been addressing the problems facing troubled families since before the summer disorder.
- The Local Government Association (LGA) believes that by coordinating public services for families with multiple problems across a local area, support can be provided more effectively and efficiently.
- It is welcome news that the money is going to build on existing work locally, rather than some new, separate initiative being bolted on.
- All agencies, central and local, will need to work closely together to get over some of the hurdles to delivering more coordinated and effective services.
- It will be challenging to achieve the 120,000 target by 2015 and success will depend on all public services in a local area and government departments working closely together.
- The issues are complex and there are no quick fixes but it is right that every effort is made to ensure support is targeted at those most in need.

Payment by results

The £450 million means the Government will offer up to 40 per cent of the cost of dealing with these families to local authorities on a payment-by-results basis. Local public services will need to provide the other 60 per cent of helping these families. Payments will be made when local authorities and their partners achieve success with families and the Government has outlined the headline goals and how success will be measured with the following criteria:

- Children back into school;
- Reduce their criminal and anti-social behaviour;
- Parents on the road back to work, and
- Reduce the costs to the taxpayer and local authorities.

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**LGA View**

- The extra money is good news and will help local areas to scale up existing work.
- However, local partners, such as health, police will also need to contribute too but they will also see the benefits such as fewer police call outs and alcohol and drug related hospital visits. Government departments need to give a strong message to their agencies about contributing.
- It is important that we get the scheme right and to make sure that the definition of a ‘result’ and the ensuing payment is realistic. The LGA will carry on working with the Government on the detail to make sure it works for councils.

**Trouble-shooters**

The Government will make money available to local authorities to fund a national network of Troubled Family ‘Trouble-Shooters’.

**LGA View**

- The funds should help councils to coordinate different activities with troubled families across local areas.
- The LGA welcomes the fact that trouble-shooters will be appointed by councils.

**Troubled Families Team**

A new Troubled Families Team based within the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and headed by Louise Casey and reporting to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, has been established to join up efforts across Whitehall, provide expert help to local areas and drive forward the strategy.

**LGA View**

- As a cross-departmental body, the Troubled Families Team should use its influence to ensure other departments work with councils.