REPORT FOR INFORMATION BULLETIN

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<tr>
<th>Subject:</th>
<th>North East Surrey Family Support Programme</th>
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<td>Lead Officer:</td>
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<td>Councillor Christine Cross</td>
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<td>Link to Council Priorities:</td>
<td>A safer, caring and health Elmbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exempt information:</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>Delegated status:</td>
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

To provide an overview of the first year of the North East Family Support Programme, which covers Elmbridge, Spelthorne and Epsom and Ewell.

**REPORT:**

1. **OVERVIEW**

1.1 The Surrey Family Support programme is Surrey’s delivery of the Government’s Troubled Families Programme, operating across all 11 Boroughs and Districts. The service provides intensive family support with a multi-agency ‘team around the family’.

1.2 Phase 1 was implemented in April 2013, with Elmbridge and Spelthorne becoming operational in June 2013. Phase 2 was implemented in October 2013 when Epsom and Ewell joined the programme.

1.3 Elmbridge, Spelthorne and Epsom & Ewell are delivering the programme as the North East Surrey Family Support Team.

1.4 The Government has set a target of turning around 120,000 families in England by 2015.

1.5 In North East Surrey 315 families have been identified as meeting the following criteria:

   i. **Crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB)** – a young person has a proven offence in the last 12 months and / or where one or more family member has been subject to ASB intervention in the last 12 months.

   ii. **Children not in school, training or employment** – family are affected by truancy or exclusion from school where a young person has a history of school exclusions, is in a pupil referral unit or has 15% unauthorised absences in the last 3 terms.

   iii. **Adult on out of work benefits** – have an adult in receipt of out of work benefits.
1.6 In Surrey there are also local discretionary criteria. This is where only two of the above criteria are met then families can be added if there is cause for concern. This includes families where there are mental health problems, domestic abuse, substance misuse, the risk of homelessness, where a young person is not in education employment or training (NEET).

1.7 The current criteria for the programme is being reviewed as part of the work that is being undertaken for the second stage of the programme. It has been proposed that the national Trouble Families Programme will be extended to cover 400,000 families between 2015 – 2020. For Surrey this will mean a turnaround of c.4200 families over the five years. In order to achieve this the referral criteria may need to be extended.

2. THE DELIVERY MODEL

2.1 Families referred to the Team will receive up to one year’s support. This consists of a twelve week period of intensive support from a Family Support Coordinator and then up to 12 months support from a Team Around the Family (TAF). The TAF consists of professionals and extended family members and friends.

2.2 Through the TAF approach the team are supporting the coordination of agencies whilst at the same time forming and developing positive partnerships with a range of professionals including the Police, Youth Support Officer, Education Welfare Officers and Home School Link Workers.

3. TARGETS

3.1 The Family Support Team has a turnaround target of 152 families to be achieved by October 2014.

3.2 At the end of March 2014, forty four (44) families have been supported. The team are on target to support approximately 107 families by October. Payment by results has been received for 129 families.

4. OUTCOMES

4.1 At the end of the first year the team have been able to identify a number of outcomes for some of the families, including:

- A reduction in the exclusion from the local community and social isolation
- Improvement in parenting skills.
- Increased confidence in managing the home, for example better debt management.
- Increased school attendance.
- Reduction in school exclusions.
- Reduction in offending
4.2 The Family Support Co-ordinators have also been able to support the families in a number of specific ways, by:

- Helping to write funding applications to charities for items such as school uniforms and furniture.
- Helping to access training courses for parents.
- Helping children to apply to colleges.
- Ensuring children have the right support at school.
- Ensuring support is given with CV writing.
- Providing emotional support, advocacy and advice.
- Completing referrals to the Domestic Abuse Outreach Service.
- Supporting families to manage the impact of domestic abuse.
- Supporting house moves, for example obtaining funding for a removal van.
- Supporting access to local health services.
- Helping with family rules.
- Helping families to learn about healthy eating.
- Ensuring children are attending school on time.

5. CASE STUDY

Family B has five children aged between five and eighteen years old. The parents are approaching their late forties. They live in a housing association property and both are unemployed and reliant on out of work benefits to meet their immediate needs.

They were going through crises caused by ill-health of the mother and younger daughter and criminal investigations against Child A for allegations of a serious nature. In addition, to these issues, they were experiencing the stressors of poverty and unemployment, harassment and death threats from the victim’s family and neighbors who knew about the alleged offence. The impact on the family precipitated a referral to the Family Support Programme by the Home School Link worker prior to a referral to Children Social Care who concluded their involvement with no further action taken.

A holistic assessment undertaken by the Family Support Coordinator revealed that the mother’s mental health had improved although physical health problems persisted. Bail conditions against Child A had been lifted and all charges had been dropped and was back at school on a reduced timetable. During the course of the police investigations Child A had to change address and was accommodated by the Grandfather. The impact upon wider family was evident in the Grandfather who had to move to a bigger property to accommodate Child A.

Child B and C needed extra support at school as they have aspirations to obtain the required grades for getting into college.

Child D suffered from persistent swollen lymph glands and had three operations. Child D adenoids and tonsils have been removed, leaving a scar on the neck that will need plastic surgery in the future and is constantly on antibiotics.
causing recurrent ear, nose and throat infections. The on-going health problems of Child D meant they missed a lot of school and fell behind key learning milestones.

The parents were struggling to meet all the needs the family. Two of the children were being bullied at school which they attributed to their appearance and needed school uniforms and shoes, the home needed decorating and the parents were in debt and struggling to cope with the utility bills.

Mother had plans to go back to training and employment and father wanted to complete training and get back into employment. However there were concerns around care responsibilities, impact of loss of benefits such as inability to pay all the bills, especially housing and council tax.

The family were initially apprehensive of the assessment and disclosed limited information, consistently stating everything was fine. As the relationship developed over the period of assessment they disclosed more information about their circumstances. Their initial reservations were explained as the perception that the agency’s involvement was brought about by information given to Children Social Care and the assessment was part of the process to remove their children.

The interesting aspect of this case study is that most people have hopes and dreams but get caught in the poverty trap due to both personal and structural problems. In the case of this family, the parents lacked the skills to acquire a well-paid job and they were faced with the dilemma of financing all their bills including child care costs if they take up employment. They have no knowledge of in-work-benefits or accessing training. What they benefited from the family support team was the systemic, relationship-based, empowerment, strengths-based and solution-focused practice approach in considering the needs of the whole family, building a good relationship, motivating them to take the achievable steps to make a positive change as well as including them in the assessment and intervention stage.

**Financial Implications:**
None, for the purpose of this report.

**Environmental/Sustainability Implications:**
None, for the purpose of this report.

**Legal Implications:**
None, for the purpose of this report.

**Equality Implications:**
None, for the purpose of this report.
**Risk Implications:**
None, for the purpose of this report.

**Community Safety Implications:**
None, for the purpose of this report.

**Principal Consultees:**
None, for the purpose of this report.

**Background papers:**
None

**Enclosures/Appendices:**
None

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