

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**LOCAL COMMITTEE (RUNNYMEDE)**

**DATE: 6 JULY 2015**

**LEAD OFFICER: CHRIS HUNT, RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL – LEAD FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**SUBJECT: FAMILY SUPPORT PROJECT – LOCAL UPDATE**

**DIVISION: ALL**



**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The report outlines the aims and resources of the Family Support Project, which operates across Surrey and is co-ordinated at county level, focusing on the recent achievements of the local team which covers Runnymede and Surrey Heath. This work is financed by the Department for Communities and Local Government under the Government's Troubled Families initiative.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Local Committee (Runnymede) is asked to note:**

- i) the current role and achievements of the Family Support Project in Runnymede.**

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 The Runnymede and Surrey Heath Family Support Programme (FSP) is funded through Surrey County Council, which distributes grant money (Department for Communities and Local Government) for the Government's "Troubled Families Programme". The initial project ran until March 2015. In June 2013 the Treasury announced that an extra £200 million would be available for the period 2015-16, and for a five year period thereafter to fund the project through "payment by results" money.
- 1.2 Surrey Heath & Runnymede Borough Councils joined in partnership to deliver the programme. Surrey Heath Borough Council is the designated lead in the partnership and delivers the service for and on behalf of Surrey Heath & Runnymede Boroughs. The Runnymede & Surrey Heath team was the last of the District and Boroughs to come into operation in Surrey.
- 1.3 Despite this, the team has successfully met targets that were set to be achieved by March 2015, and has received commendation from Surrey County Council in the most recent quality assurance audit (carried out in March 2015):

### **1.4 Recent feedback**

*"Front line practice is of a consistently high standard with a consistent offer to families across the two districts and boroughs. Family feedback is extremely positive. Families are being turned around. This is commendable in such a new service."*

*"Safeguarding is thorough and exacting. Policies, procedures and systems provide a solid backdrop to practice. There is evidence of careful assessment of risk and management of risk"*

*"Partner multi-agency engagement is largely embedded and positive. Those partners referring in to the service can do so with confidence in the reliability of the service. Referral rates are high and are gathering momentum in Troubled Families 2."*

*"The relationship between FSP and Children's Safeguarding Service is the most positive in the County. Family assessments are of a consistently high standard."*

<b>2. ANALYSIS:</b>
---------------------

2.1 Troubled Families 1 (TF1) sought to work with families who met the following criteria:

- Worklessness
- Anti-Social or criminal behaviours, and
- Poor attendance at school.

2.2 TF2 (started in February 2015) seeks to work with families who meet an expanded set of criteria:

- Parents and children involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour;
- Children that have not been attending school regularly or that have behavioural difficulties at school;
- Children who need help eg: a child with an early help assessment or a child supported by children's social services;
- Adults at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness;
- Families affected by domestic abuse and/or substance use;
- Parents and children with a range of health issues – affecting physical and mental well-being.

2.3 These expanded criteria will increase the workload for the service and it is intended that the number of families eligible for The Family Support Service will increase from 1020 to 4000 families across the county. In each District and Borough the figures are estimated to quadruple. Surrey Heath & Runnymede Boroughs had an initial target in TF1 of 172 families, and in TF2 the target figure is just over 600 families over a five-year period from March 2015 -2020.

### **Resources**

2.4 There are no funds to increase the staffing resource within the Family Support Team and therefore this expansion will require an increased effectiveness in partnership and collaborative working. Surrey Heath & Runnymede Borough team are well established and the partnerships across the two boroughs are robust and work well. Engagement at the multi-agency panels is excellent and there is a commitment across all agencies to work differently to support best outcomes for families residing in the boroughs. However TF2 does present some significant challenges around how we resource our communities and work in partnership to maximise the effectiveness of collaboration.

2.5 The Service is currently in transformation undergoing a restructure to create two locality based teams – one based in Surrey Heath and one based in Runnymede. Experience over the past 18 months has shown that there is a need for staff to be based within each of the borough offices. Currently the mileage costs and efficiency of travelling across two boroughs is significant, alongside the barriers to working together whilst being based outside of the borough. We know that relationships develop positively and a greater understanding is created when staff are co-located. The consultation period for the proposed restructure is about to conclude, and if agreeable the team will be divided by September 2015 and a base made for the Runnymede Family Support Team within the Runnymede Civic Centre.

### **Factors leading to success**

- 2.6 The FSP ensures that all relevant and appropriate agencies are brought together to best understand and assess the complex needs of families via a single multi-agency conversation and action plan. This helps support the family in a unique way where they can speak with all agencies in one multi agency meeting, rather than being asked to attend several meetings with individual agencies and having to repeat their history and difficulties. The FSP and its partners work **with** a family and avoid doing **to** or **for** them and seek to empower each individual family member to take personal responsibility for sustainable and positive change. Experience over the past 18 months has shown that it is not easy to organise multi-agency meetings with the family but that the benefits of doing this are not to be underestimated.
- 2.7 It is the systemic cessation of agencies providing support in isolation that makes the Family Support Programme so unique and effective. The bringing together of appropriate and relevant agencies to provide a holistic assessment of each family member and the family dynamic, helps support the family to make positive and sustainable changes.

## **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 The success of the Family Support Service must be shared with its partners. The FSP cannot and does not achieve this success in its own right. It is the effective relationships with its partners that enables the service to thrive and flourish. The practice model is based upon solution-focused interventions and upon evidence-based practice of what we have learnt works when working with families with complex and challenging needs.

---

### **Contact Officer:**

Jacqueline Riddles, Family Support manager, Surrey Heath BC.

### **Annexes: 1**

---