

Children and Families Select Committee  
20 March 2013

## **Report of the Supporting Families Task Group**

**Purpose of the report:** Policy Development and Review

This report contains the findings and final recommendations of the Supporting Families Task Group, which has scrutinised the development of the Surrey Family Support Programme.

### **Introduction:**

1. The Surrey Family Support Programme is the name given to the local implementation of the Government's Troubled Families Programme, which seeks to target interventions at those families who have the most needs and cause the most problems within their communities. The Supporting Families Task Group is a cross-select committee Task Group, sponsored by the Children and Families Select Committee, which has scrutinised the development of the Surrey Family Support Programme. Its membership is as follows:

Clare Curran (Children and Families Select Committee, Chairman of the Task Group)

Steve Cosser (Communities Select Committee)

Tim Hall (Education Select Committee)

Peter Hickman (Health Scrutiny Committee)

Sally Marks (Adult Social Care Select Committee)

2. The Supporting Families Task Group brought its scoping report to Children and Families Select Committee on 10 October and to Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 October. This report included the following objectives:

- To consider the high-level objectives of the Surrey Family Support Programme;
- To recommend how families should be prioritised for inclusion within the local project;

- To identify what is being done to simplify and rationalise the multi-agency service offer to families within the Programme;
  - To assess how sustainability of outcomes is being built into the Programme's design;
  - To consider how defined outcomes for families will be monitored;
  - To review how the local business case for Surrey agencies is being developed and what systems are being put in place to identify cash savings;
  - To consider current governance of the Family Support Programme and recommend governance and scrutiny arrangements going forward for the Surrey Family Support Programme.
3. A short update report which provided an interim response to the work of the Surrey Family Support Programme was presented to the Children and Families Select Committee on 30 January 2013. This report welcomed the development of a challenging inter-agency project and agreed in principle with the model being developed by the Surrey Family Support Programme.
4. The task group has identified five recommendations for Cabinet which are listed below. The task group has also discussed a number of recommendations with the Head of Family Services, which aim to help shape the programme locally. The Head of Family Services is in agreement with these recommendations, which have either been implemented during the course of the task group's work, or will be implemented in due course. The recommendations to the Head of Family Services are included below for information.

<b>Methodology</b>
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5. The Task Group began its work by receiving evidence from the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, the Strategic Director for Children, Schools and Families, the Head of Family Services and the officers with responsibility for the pilot programme in Waverley – the Chief Executive of Waverley Borough Council, the Strategic Director for Housing, Environment and Community Services, Waverley Borough Council and the Manager for the Waverley Family Support Team.

The Task Group then broadened its approach by receiving evidence from Heads of Service and partner agencies:

- Caroline Budden (Deputy Director – Children, Schools and Families)
- Garath Symonds (Assistant Director for Young People)
- P J Wilkinson (Assistant Director for Schools and Learning); Paula Evans (SW Area Education Officer)
- Dave Sargeant (Assistant Director – Personal Care and Support, Adult Social Care); Donal Hegarty (Senior Manager, Mental Health Commissioning, Adult Social Care)
- Mandy Dunn (Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust); Sue Walters (Central Surrey Health); Helen Bennett (First Community Health and Care)
- Alison Wilks (Surrey Chief Housing Officers Group)

- Lucy Anderson (Skills Training UK)
  - Joanne Tester (Guildford Action for Families)
  - Lin Pedrick (Director at Surrey and Sussex Probation Trust); Georgi Larkins (Surrey and Sussex Probation Trust)
  - Darren McInnes (Surrey Police)
  - Local Family Support Team Leads (District/Boroughs)
6. The Supporting Families Task Group has also reviewed a number of DCLG documents and considered some of the debates that have taken place nationally regarding the troubled families programme. It has considered benchmarking information on the approach to the 'Troubled Families' programme in different upper tier local authority areas; and reviewed the proposed performance management framework to be used to record and report on the progress and outcomes of families in Surrey.
  7. The Task Group felt that it would be useful to include a case study in its report to help readers understand how the Government envisages this family intervention approach will work. This is included as appendix 1.

<b>Detailed Findings</b>
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**Objective 1: To consider the high-level objectives of the Surrey Family Support Programme**

8. The Task Group considered a summary of evidence by the DCLG<sup>1</sup> in support of the use of family intervention to achieve good outcomes for families with multiple needs and also heard support for family intervention from a number of the witnesses. It recognised the opportunity that this Programme offers to make services to vulnerable families more effective and efficient by integrating and localising the co-ordination of support – an opportunity supported by all the witnesses that the Task Group spoke to.
9. The Task Group also considered the Children, Schools and Families directorate Public Value Programme (PVP), which has the objective of enabling collaborative partnership working with all partners. This will bring greater efficiencies and effective working practices to collectively benefit children, young people and families in Surrey. The PVP aims to improve outcomes while delivering savings of £40m by 2017.

Two of the project streams within the PVP focus on early help and family support. The Task Group spoke to the Head of Family Services and the project leads for these two streams about how the Surrey Family Support Programme fits within the PVP. The Task Group understands that while the PVP is reviewing the universal service offer to families, the Surrey Family Support Programme is a discrete project working with specific families. However, the Task Group is aware that one of the objectives of the Surrey Family Support Programme is to develop a model of partnership working for family support and early intervention which can

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<sup>1</sup> DCLG (December 2012) Working with Troubled Families  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-with-troubled-families-a-guide-to-evidence-and-good-practice>)

then be applied to all vulnerable families. The Task Group feels that it is therefore important that the PVP and the Surrey Family Support Programme takes a strategically integrated approach.

10. Therefore, the Task Group supports the stated objectives of the Surrey Family Support Programme:

- Transform the quality and volume of multi-agency working with vulnerable families and children, introducing a single family assessment and plan.
- Development of effective family support practice and a sustainable model of partnership working for **all** vulnerable families.
- Improved outcomes for all the vulnerable families who take part.

However, the Task Group would like further clarity over how these objectives dovetail with the wider objectives of the PVP.

*Cabinet recommendation 1: That the Cabinet approves the stated objectives of the Surrey Family Support Programme.*

*Cabinet recommendation 2: That the Cabinet asks that the Strategic Director of Children , Schools and Families provide clarity over how the objectives of the Surrey Family Support Programme relate to the wider objectives of the Directorate Public Value Programme.*

**Objective 2: To recommend how families should be prioritised for inclusion within the local project**

11. The government has defined the families eligible for the programme as those who meet each of the following criteria:

- Have children not attending school - +15% unauthorised absence, excluded pupils etc, and;
- Are involved in anti-social behaviour, e.g. young offenders, adults with ASBOs, families with an anti-social behaviour related housing order, and;
- Have an adult claiming an unemployment benefit.

Where the number of families who meet all three criteria fall short of the local authority's target, families who meet two of the criteria alongside a local discretionary criteria can be included. Surrey has been given a target of turning around the lives of 1050 families by May 2015. However, as few as 100 Surrey families have been estimated to meet all three of the Government's criteria.

12. The Task Group has debated the opportunities and limitations of a local discretionary factor. Surrey's chosen local discretionary factor, the concept of a 'family of concern', is welcomed as it offers flexibility to Local Family Support Teams to tailor the offer according to local conditions and needs. A 'family of concern' is defined as families where one or more of the following issues are present: children in need, mental ill-health issues within the family, drug and alcohol problems, NEET and/or RONI young people, a risk of becoming homeless and families with incidences of domestic abuse. The Task Group recognised that the current definition encompasses most of the key issues identified at witness sessions. However, the Task Group also heard from a number of witnesses about the increasing problems of household debt. As household debt can be seen to underlie many of the other problems faced by troubled families, the Task Group suggests that the Head of Family Services discusses with Local Family Support Team Leads whether problems with household debt could be another factor within the 'family of concern' definition.
13. Given the limited number of families within Surrey who meet all three of the Government's criteria, the 'family of concern' local discretionary factor will allow Local Family Support Teams and partners the flexibility to jointly identify families who require intensive support or who would be most responsive to this kind of approach. The Task Group would encourage discussion and local agreements between different partners involved in the Programme as to how families are to be prioritised for inclusion within the Programme to ensure support and allow resources to be aligned to the local networks being established.
14. The Task Group recognised that local variations in approach to prioritising families for inclusion could lead to Local Family Support Teams working with very different types of family. It would like to encourage Local Family Support Teams to support a mix of families with long-term and complex problems as well as families with lower level problems for whom early intervention could prevent problems becoming entrenched. The Task Group felt that mechanisms would need to be developed within the Programme to ensure consistency in the types of outcomes achieved across the county.

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 1: That the Head of Family Services resolves with the Local Family Support Team Leads whether problems of household debt could be another factor within the 'family of concern' discretionary factor.*

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 2: That the Head of Family Services encourages discussion and local agreements between different partners involved in the Programme as to how families are to be prioritised for inclusion within the Programme to ensure support and allow resources to be aligned to the local networks being established.*

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 3: That Local Family Support Teams be encouraged to support a mix of families with long-term and complex problems as well as families with lower level problems for whom early intervention could prevent problems becoming entrenched.*

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 4: That the Head of Family Services develops mechanisms within the Programme to ensure that, despite local variations in how families are prioritised for inclusion, there is consistency of outcomes across Surrey.*

**Objective 3: To identify what is being done to simplify and rationalise the multi-agency service offer to families within the Programme**

15. The Task Group reviewed the pilot scheme conducted in Waverley, meeting with the officer leads and talking to many of the agencies involved. In Waverley, a Family Support Team of staff seconded from partner agencies including Housing, Surrey Police, Surrey Children's Service, Adult Social Care and the Youth Support Service provided a co-located intensive family intervention service to a small group of families with multiple needs. While the Task Group was struck by the enthusiasm of the Waverley officers for the project, it recognised the problems of sustaining an approach which seconds officers from services into local teams across the county. Surrey partners have since moved away from the approach taken in Waverley, instead intending to adopt a model which combines a small Local Family Support Team consisting of family coordinators and administrative staff, alongside a 'virtual team' of family support professionals from across partner agencies locally. They would together form a 'Team Around the Family' for each family participating in the Surrey Family Support Programme. An evaluation is currently being undertaken of the Waverley pilot scheme but the Task Group has been reassured through meeting with partner agencies that lessons have already been learnt and are being addressed in the programme being rolled out across Surrey.
16. The Task Group supports the model being implemented which gives local leadership to Borough and District Councils; provides for a co-ordinated single multi-agency assessment and plan and benefits from a paid resource in each local area to drive this project forward.
17. The Task Group heard concern about how the potential volume of paperwork involved could hold back the project and hopes were expressed that the multi-agency assessment would be light touch and link to existing assessments to avoid duplication and a lengthy process being initiated. Dialogue should take place between partner agencies before families are engaged to avoid "reinventing the wheel" and adding another layer of bureaucracy and complexity to the lives of these families.



18. The Task Group felt that there was a specific need locally for partner agencies to understand how the voluntary, community and faith sector could be involved in working with troubled families. The Task Group was particularly inspired by a meeting with Joanne Tester of Guildford Action for Families, which is a voluntary organisation that has a long history and experience in working with the types of families that the Surrey Family Support Programme intends to engage with. The Task Group noted the potential benefits of engaging the voluntary, community and faith sector, including its flexibility in comparison with the statutory sector and its relationship with and knowledge of the local community. It was felt that further guidance on involving this valuable sector should be issued to Local Family Support Team Leads.
19. The Task Group heard from a number of witnesses of the concern and uncertainty around how the Programme would interact with families who have a child on the Child Protection Register. It felt that it was important to address any unease amongst partners by providing clear guidance on this issue. However, it was understood that families with Child Protection Plans are to be excluded from the Programme apart from where it is part of a stepping down process led by Surrey Children's Services.
20. The Task Group recognised the increase in partnership working that has taken place in Surrey over recent years but accepted the views expressed by most witnesses that a step change in the culture of partnership working was still required. This would be key to the effectiveness of local networks and so time would need to be devoted to building relationships, developing a shared understanding of the Programme's objectives, developing a respect for professional standards and breaking down barriers e.g. to the sharing of information. The continuity of professionals engaged within the local networks was also crucial to improved partnership working and sustaining relationships with the families involved. Therefore, all partner agencies and their workers should be strongly encouraged and incentivised to be fully committed to and maintain stability of personnel within the Programme.

The Task Group agreed with the views expressed by some witnesses that Headteachers and Home School Link Workers should be approached individually to engage with the Surrey Family Support Programme. Such engagement would ensure that the Programme benefits from pre-existing relationships with the family and knowledge which has accrued over time.

21. The Task Group felt that there were issues beyond the scope of the Programme which may jeopardise its success. These issues included:

- How different eligibility criteria for different services and agencies would be taken account of through the multi-agency assessment and plan process. For example, a low-level mental health problem may be identified as an issue that needs to be addressed but would not qualify the individual for mental health services. The Task Group was concerned as to how this would affect the potential of the Programme to coordinate effective early intervention for some families. The Task Group heard some conflicting opinion as to how service eligibility criteria would be applied for families within the Surrey Families Support Programme and felt that further clarify was required.
- Lengthy processes to access services meaning they may not be accessible to families within the intensive support period.
- Services which are located in hard to reach places may prevent families from accessing these services at all, or after the intensive support has come to an end.

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 5: That the Head of Family Services be charged with investigating how the voluntary, community and faith sector can be engaged with the Surrey Family Support Programme and issuing guidance to Local Family Support Teams to implement this.*

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 6: That the Head of Family Services issues clear guidance to Local Family Support Teams and Surrey Children's Services about the relationship between the Supporting Families Programme and families with Child Protection Plans.*

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 7: That Local Family Support Teams be given guidance and support on facilitating cultural change to help professionals from all agencies in the Local Family Support Programmes to identify themselves as part of the local networks and Teams Around the Family.*

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 8: That all Borough/District Councils and partner agencies be strongly encouraged and incentivised to engage fully and maintain a stability of personnel in the Local Family Support Programme.*

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 9: That Local Family Support Teams are encouraged to engage individually with Headteachers and Home School Link Workers.*

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 10: That the Head of Family Services issues guidance on the consistent application of service eligibility criteria for families participating in the Surrey Family Support Programme.*



#### **Objective 4: To assess how sustainability of outcomes is being built into the Programme's design**

22. The sustainability of improved outcomes was of key concern to the Task Group. It noted that, while research in this area is limited, there are some studies which had found evidence of lasting change<sup>2</sup>.
23. The Task Group concluded that the following issues would impact on the sustainability of any change in a family's behaviour:
- How families are engaged in the programme – this requires staff with the right skills, training and the flexibility and commitment to work with the families as appropriate. The Task Group heard about how the use of positive, pre-existing relationships with families can be harnessed to encourage engagement with the Programme. This could be an existing relationship with a statutory agency or, alternatively, involvement of the voluntary, community and faith sector may be invaluable in ensuring successful outcomes.
  - Whether families are central to and an equal partner in the Programme i.e. should have input into the multi-agency assessment and plan; agencies should listen to and take account of family priorities; families should be involved in measuring progress.
  - Whether there is real flexibility over the length of the intensive support offered to families, with more than 12 weeks intensive support offered where necessary.
  - Whether integration into the community is part of the multi-agency plan.
  - Whether there is a 'step-down plan' agreed with the family.
24. The Task Group was keen to explore the sustainability of the long term business case for potential future joint investment in the Surrey Family Support Programme. To understand the social benefits of this programme, it suggested the commissioning of research on outcomes with a number of families a year after leaving the programme.

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 11: That the Head of Family Services consider the conclusions of the Task Group on issues which would impact on sustainable outcomes for families and respond to the Children and Families Select Committee in due course.*

*Cabinet recommendation 3: That Cabinet reviews the outcomes for a sample of the families a year after completing the Programme.*

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<sup>2</sup> DCLG (December 2012) Working with Troubled Families  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-with-troubled-families-a-guide-to-evidence-and-good-practice>)

**Objective 5: To consider how defined outcomes for families will be monitored**

25. The Task Group reviewed the performance framework which will be used to monitor progress across the county for the Government criteria and local criteria which fall within the 'families of concern' concept. The Task Group accepted the use of qualitative measures of performance to assess progress on local criteria but felt that there was a need for some consistency of approach. To that end, it makes the following recommendation:

*Recommendation to the Head of Family Services 12: That the Surrey Family Support Programme co-ordinating team develops a consistent approach to and moderation of performance monitoring by:*

- *liaising with Local Family Support Teams to agree definitions for each of the criteria within the 'family of concern' discretionary factor*
- *setting out quantitative measures of performance where they exist and providing guidance on qualitative measures to allow for some consistency in progress reporting across the borough and district teams*

**Objective 6: To review how the local business case for Surrey agencies is being developed and what systems are being put in place to identify cash savings**

26. The Task Group was concerned about the financial sustainability of the Programme, particularly given the reliance on Payment by Results in the second and third years of the Programme. The sustainability of the Programme would depend on the willingness of partners to jointly fund it. The Task Group acknowledged the Government's contention that the Troubled Families Programme would reduce costs for acute services in the medium to long term where successful, but felt that an analysis was needed within Surrey to quantify the costs of the families included within the Programme and any projected savings to the public purse generally and to which areas of public service this might accrue to e.g. police, health e.tc. This would either provide evidence to support a business case for further joint investment or to change the approach if necessary, not only for Surrey County Council's Family Support Programme but for Surrey's general approach to partnership working. The quantification of any projected savings would be of particular interest to the Children, Schools and Families directorate given the Medium Term Financial Plan pressures and the requirement on the Directorate to deliver savings of £40m by 2017.

*Cabinet recommendation 4: That the Cabinet receives an analysis of the costs of families included within the Surrey Family Support Programme and projected savings to the public purse.*

**Objective 7: To consider current governance of the Family Support Programme and recommend governance and scrutiny arrangements going forward for the Surrey Family Support programme.**

27. The Task Group noted the suggested governance arrangements for the Surrey Family Support Programme. While it supports local determination of local governance structures, it did request that Local Family Support Teams have a mechanism for involving and raising awareness of elected Members, through Local Committees and District/Borough Councils.
28. The Task Group felt that Surrey County Council Members could best engage with the Surrey Family Support Programme through regular monitoring on a countywide basis by the Children and Families Select Committee (or its equivalent). The review of Phase 1 implementation and further monitoring reports will be scheduled when timely.

*Cabinet recommendation 5: That the Cabinet encourages the Borough and District Councils to develop a mechanism for involving and raising the awareness of elected Members through local governance structures, including Local Committees.*

<b>Conclusions:</b>
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29. The Supporting Families Task Group has worked closely with the Head of Family Services and spoken to a number of the agencies who will be involved with the roll-out of the Surrey Family Support Programme. It understands and welcomes the work undertaken and which continues to be undertaken to develop and implement this multi-agency programme. The Task Group endorses the objectives and the model being implemented and presents its recommendations to Cabinet in support of the Surrey Family Support Programme.
30. The task group has also discussed a number of recommendations with the Head of Family Services, which aim to help shape the programme locally. The Head of Family Services is in agreement with these recommendations, which have either been implemented during the course of the task group's work, or will be implemented in due course. The recommendations to the Head of Family Services are included in context throughout this report and are also included below for information:
  - (i) That the Head of Family Services resolves with the Local Family Support Team Leads whether problems of household debt could be another factor within the 'family of concern' discretionary factor.
  - (ii) That the Head of Family Services encourages discussion and local agreements between different partners involved in the Programme as to how families are to be prioritised for inclusion within the Programme to ensure support and allow resources to be aligned to the local networks being established.

- (iii) That Local Family Support Teams be encouraged to support a mix of families with long-term and complex problems as well as families with lower level problems for whom early intervention could prevent problems becoming entrenched.
- (iv) That the Head of Family Services develops mechanisms within the Programme to ensure that, despite local variations in how families are prioritised for inclusion, there is consistency of outcomes across Surrey.
- (v) That the Head of Family Services be charged with investigating how the voluntary, community and faith sector can be engaged with the Surrey Family Support Programme and issuing guidance to Local Family Support Teams to implement this.
- (vi) That the Head of Family Services issues clear guidance to Local Family Support Teams and Surrey Children's Services about the relationship between the Supporting Families Programme and families with Child Protection Plans.
- (vii) That Local Family Support Teams be given guidance and support on facilitating cultural change to help professionals from all agencies in the Local Family Support Programmes to identify themselves as part of the local networks and Teams Around the Family.
- (viii) That all Borough/District Councils and partner agencies be strongly encouraged and incentivised to engage fully and maintain a stability of personnel in the Local Family Support Programme.
- (ix) That Local Family Support Teams are encouraged to engage individually with Headteachers and Home School Link Workers.
- (x) That the Head of Family Services issues guidance on the consistent application of service eligibility criteria for families participating in the Surrey Family Support Programme.
- (xi) That the Head of Family Services consider the conclusions of the Task Group on issues which would impact on sustainable outcomes for families and respond to the Children and Families Select Committee in due course.
- (xii) That the Surrey Family Support Programme co-ordinating team develops a consistent approach to and moderation of performance monitoring by:
  - liaising with Local Family Support Teams to agree definitions for each of the criteria within the 'family of concern' discretionary factor
  - setting out quantitative measures of performance where they exist and providing guidance on qualitative measures to allow for some consistency in progress reporting across the borough and district teams

## **Financial and value for money implications**

31. The Troubled Families Programme is a key Government priority and funding is linked to its successful implementation. Surrey County Council and its partners can potentially receive up to £3.5 million over three years through a system of payment by results. The Government strongly believes that its new approach will realise further efficiencies and deliver better outcomes for the families involved.

The Task Group has found that the financial sustainability of the Surrey Family Support Programme partly depends on the ongoing willingness of partners to jointly fund it and so developing an evidence base on the social and/or financial benefits of the Programme should be a priority.

## **Equalities Implications**

32. The Surrey Family Support Programme seeks to target support at those families who have a multiplicity of problems. As the programme and its priorities are developed, consideration will need to be given to the equalities profile of the families targeted through the programme and the success of family participation. Children and Families Select Committee will have the opportunity to scrutinise an equalities impact assessment as part of the review of Phase 1 implementation.

## **Risk Management Implications**

33. This is a complex change programme involving the careful coordination of many agencies and professionals using local arrangements. Countywide and local implementation plans are in development.

## **Implications for the Council's Priorities**

34. The Task Group was pleased to note that young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) are included within the local criteria of a family of concern. The programme will also target families of the county's most vulnerable children. Both issues are in line with SCC priorities for 2012/13.

<b>Recommendations:</b>
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35. The recommendations to Cabinet are included in context throughout the report and are listed below for ease of reference:
- (i) That the Cabinet approves the stated objectives of the Surrey Family Support Programme.
  - (ii) That the Cabinet asks that the Strategic Director of Children, Schools and Families provide clarity over how the objectives of the Surrey Family Support Programme relate to the wider objectives of the Directorate Public Value Programme.

- (iii) That Cabinet reviews the outcomes for a sample of the families a year after completing the Programme.
- (iv) That the Cabinet receives an analysis of the costs of families included within the Surrey Family Support Programme and projected savings to the public purse.
- (v) That the Cabinet encourages the Borough and District Councils to develop a mechanism for involving and raising the awareness of elected Members through local governance structures, including Local Committees.

<b>Next steps:</b>
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Children and Families Select Committee to schedule the review of Phase 1 implementation on its forward work plan.

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**Sources/background papers:**

DCLG (March 2012) The Troubled Families Programme: Financial Framework for the Troubled Families programme's payment-by-results scheme for local authorities ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

DCLG (July 2012) Listening to Troubled Families ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

DCLG (December 2012) Working with Troubled Families ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

DCLG (January 2013) The Cost of Troubled Families ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))