

Press release: Brokenshire: hundreds of thousands of families helped to change their lives for the better

A programme supporting families with complex problems has reduced the proportion of children going into care, adults claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and juvenile convictions, Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP has today (19 March 2019) confirmed.

Evidence from the National Evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme shows that the scheme has improved outcomes for families and helped reform local services.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP commended the positive effect the programme is having in communities across the country by working with whole families to provide additional stability, practical support and help them overcome complicated issues including 'worklessness', uncontrolled debt and truancy.

When compared to a similar control group, the programme of targeted intervention was found to have:

- reduced the proportion of children on the programme going into care by a third
- reduced the proportion of adults on the programme going to prison by a quarter and juvenile convictions by 15%
- supported more people on the programme back in work with 10% fewer people claiming Jobseekers Allowance

Speaking at the Centre for Social Justice, Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

We all need support and commitment to achieve our full potential. We're all the product of other people's kindness. That starts with stronger families – as the cornerstone of stronger communities – and this is the driving spirit of the Troubled Families programme.

Fresh thinking is needed now more than ever to meet the challenges we face – like knife crime and gang culture. This programme is proving it has a valuable role to play as we look forwards to the upcoming Spending Review.

It's inspiring to see agencies working better together to help people succeed but the real story is the thousands of people who've taken control of their own lives. People are being helped to help themselves.

The Troubled Families Programme supports families with complex, interconnected problems such as anti-social behaviour, mental health problems or domestic violence.

Rather than responding to each problem, or single family member separately, assigned Troubled Families keyworkers engage with the whole family. Through this approach they coordinate support from a range of services to identify and address family issues as early as possible rather than merely reacting to crises.

Dame Louise Casey said:

Since 2012, the first and current Troubled Families Programmes have – very deliberately – shaken up the way families with complex problems are supported, ensuring they are identified earlier to get the help they need, which is completely focused on helping families live better lives.

Helping families to help themselves so their kids are not taken into care or family members ending up in prison and getting more people from the programme into work is testament to what frontline staff can do with the right resources and backing.

This evaluation shows it was absolutely right to have invested so much in this approach since 2012.

Last month, a £9.5 million fund was also made available within the existing Troubled Families Programme, which will focus on supporting children and families vulnerable to knife crime and gang culture – with a further £300,000 available to train frontline staff on how to tackle childhood trauma. The money has gone to community-backed projects in 21 areas across England.

Since the current programme began in 2015, local authorities and their partners have worked with over 400,000 eligible families. This compares with only 2,000 families who had received whole family support in England between January 2006 and March 2010.

In addition to supporting families struggling with a variety of issues in their lives, the report outlines how the programme is helping develop long-term change across local services including police, schools, social care and Jobcentres.

Services and professionals are now better connected and working in partnership. Rather than circling around families with multiple and separate assessments and appointments, local authorities are using the programme to work across organisational and cultural boundaries to achieve better lives for the families in need.

The Secretary of State is committed to improving the programme further, including asking whether Troubled Families is the best name and whether it should be changed to better reflect its positive and supportive ethos and to

deepen the engagement for the work.

Read the [national evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme 2015 to 2020 report](#).

This is the fourth evaluation update and it brings together findings from the latest analysis of national and local datasets, a cost benefit analysis, case study research and staff survey research.

Find more information on the £9.8 million [Supporting Families Against Youth Crime fund](#).

The current Troubled Families Programme was rolled out in England in April 2015 and replaced the first programme which had been in place since 2012. The programme will continue support for disadvantaged families with complex problems and aims to achieve significant and sustained progress with up to 400,000 families by 2020.

The National Evaluation confirms that the programme continues to reach families with complex and multiple problems. In the year before starting the programme, families on the programme had the following characteristics compared to the general population:

- children were over 9 times more likely to be classified as a Child in Need
- adults were over 9 times more likely to have a caution or conviction
- adults were 5 times more likely to be claiming benefits
- children were nearly 3 times more likely to be persistently absent from school

In addition:

- over two fifths of troubled families had a family member with a mental health issue
- just over a fifth of troubled families had a family member affected by an incident of domestic abuse or violence