

Children and Families

INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT



we|engage



Children and Families

INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT

Tackling intergenerational disadvantage across families with complex and multiple needs.

The need

The Government's Troubled Families Programme (TFP) launched in 2012 to work intensively with families experiencing issues around school attendance and exclusion, crime and Anti-Social Behaviour, and unemployment. Family Action has been commissioned to provide Troubled Families services in a range of locations across England and we also provide a number of similarly targeted intensive family support services elsewhere. We were delighted when the Government announced that the TFP would continue until 2020. We were equally delighted when the Government announced, following feedback from Family Action and other organisations, that the second phase of the TFP would support a wider range of families. We highlighted the need to work with families experiencing domestic abuse and with physical and mental health needs and we are pleased that "significant and sustained progress" towards identified goals will now be as valued as an outcome measure for the TFP, as well as a move into continuous employment. We think this demonstrates an increased understanding of the wide range of issues faced by these families and the need for a bespoke response.

Troubled Families Programme data¹ highlights that in these families:



80%
had problems related to education

70%
had no one in work

70%
had poor physical health

50%
were involved in crime or anti social behaviour

40%
had poor mental health

30%
reported incidents of domestic abuse

30%
experienced child protection interventions



The consequences of not responding to these issues can be significant:

- As the problems are often intergenerational² - apparent in both parents and children, they replicate across generations, resulting in a perpetual cycle of challenge and disadvantage
- Experience of these issues has clear links to poor long term outcomes for children - particularly in terms of educational attainment³
- Practically, these issues result in different members of the family typically experiencing multiple contacts from a wide range of different agencies, often working in isolation on specific areas of their lives.

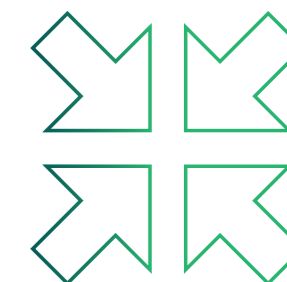
Our response

Our Intensive Family Support Services provide professional, home-based, intensive support, designed to meet the needs of families with multiple, often complex needs.

Our service works by:

- Providing a dedicated support worker who works consistently with each family, plays an active role in assessment and action-planning, and helps coordinate the involvement of other services
- Working with a family intensively (usually three to five visits a week for between 5-9 months⁴)
- Taking a strengths-based view of the family, focusing on relationship building with all family members through persistence, reliability and flexibility
- Prioritising the safety and well-being of children and young people within the family
- Signposting families to lower level support services to maintain progress once they exit the service.

we engage



Theory of Change:

Theory of Change: Intensive Family Support

Goal

Intergenerational cycle of disadvantage is halted. Families' lives are transformed.

Intermediate outcomes

- Improved school attendance, reduced exclusions
- Reduced need for child protection plans
- Reduced number of Children in Need
- Reduced incidence of anti-social behaviour or criminal activity involving family members
- Increased progress towards education, training or employment
- Improved family health and wellbeing

Activities

- Home-based intensive family support 3-5 times a week
- Relationship building, working with the whole family
- Consistent key worker approach, coordinating other services' interventions and involvement
- Advocacy and signposting to step-down services

¹ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336430/Understanding_Troubled_Families_web_format.pdf
² www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/336430/Understanding_Troubled_Families_web_format.pdf
³ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180772/DFE-00036-2012_improving_attendance_at_school.pdf
⁴ Think Family IFS / Service Specification Phase 2-Year 1



Children and Families

INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT

£44,000

£1,800



The cost benefit of our intensive family support model is significant. Our service typically costs £1,800⁹ per family whereas the cost of just responding to issues linked to these families costs the public purse an average £44,000¹⁰

Family Action Intensive Family Support Services report positive impacts on both whole family and child outcomes:

Child Protection (data from Birmingham Think Families⁵)

- 64% of children no longer on a Child Protection Plan
- 57% of children no longer Child in Need

Offending and anti-social behaviour (data from Newham Families First⁶)

- In 63% of cases (referred for offending) offending was reduced by at least 33%
- In 67% of cases (referred for anti-social behaviour) these behaviours were reduced by 60% over a six month period

Progress into work (data from Newham Families First⁷)

- In 33% of cases, families took steps towards employment including attending interviews, enrolling on courses and volunteering

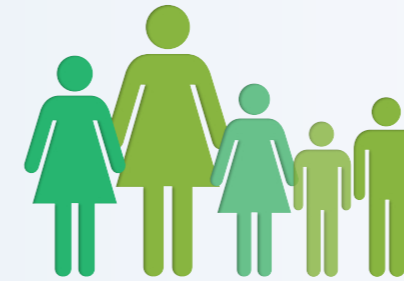
School attendance (all Intensive Family Support Services⁸)

- On median, school attendance increased by 19% (Where education issues was a reason for referral and school attendance was less than 85% at referral)

CASE FILE

Family composition:

Single mother with four children



Reasons for referral

- Children's educational attainment declining and increased exclusions from school.
- Criminal behaviour and Anti Social Behaviour (ASB). One of the children is at risk of entering the judicial system, due to continued and prolonged criminal behaviour and ASB in the community and in the family home. ASB complaints due to mother's continued disagreements with her neighbours.
- Intergenerational parenting concerns. The mother is unable to implement consistent or effective behaviour management techniques, routines or boundaries.
- Unemployment (mother).
- Drug and Alcohol dependency (mother).
- One of the children is exposed to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) through a friendship with an older male, who allowed the child to sleep over, consume drugs and alcohol and engage in sexual activity.
- Historic domestic abuse.

Support provided intensively over five months:

- Implementing age-appropriate routines, boundaries and consequences.
- Supporting mum to reflect on her parenting and the impact this was having on her children as well as her own wellbeing.
- Active representation at a child protection review, working alongside other professionals.
- Supporting children in improving school attendance and behaviour.
- Exploring the wishes and feelings of all the children, focusing on ASB and domestic abuse.
- Supported and encouraged mother to access a service that would help her to address her drug and alcohol dependency.

Outcomes achieved:

- Two of the four children increased their school attendance to over 90%.
- The referred child's risk of CSE reduced as contact with the known older male was stopped.
- Mother enrolled in a Maths and English course, to develop her own learning needs, and to support her children with their homework.
- Mother remained abstinent from alcohol and drugs throughout the intervention by Family Action and with the support of a specialist service.
- Mother's confidence and confidence in parenting and managing her children's behaviour increased.
- Family time became an important feature, with mother spending more time directly with her children.

"It's a way of giving families autonomy and empowering them to make a difference in their lives."

Intensive Family Support Worker

"They were my rock. I feel happy, in control and quite content. There is a future."

Service-user



⁵ Analysis of Think Families Troubled Families Outcomes Monitoring data (referrals dated between July 2013 and December 2014). 14 children were on a CPP at referral – this fell to 5 at closure. 14 children were CIN at referral – this fell to 6 at closure.

⁶ Analysis of Newham Families First Outcomes Monitoring data (referrals dated between March 2014 to December 2014). Offending: At referral, 8 children had a proven offence within the last 12 months. At closure, 5 of those children had reduced their offending by at least 33% in the last 6 months. ASB: At referral, 12 families were involved in ASB in the last 12 months. At closure, 8 of those families had reduced their ASB by 60% in the last 6 months.

⁷ Progress to work: 13 out of 40 families took steps towards employment such as volunteering, completing courses attending interviews and gaining part-time work.

⁸ Data taken from referral and closure data for 33 cases as at 12/8/15

⁹ Think Family IFS / Service Specification Phase 2-Year 1 The cost is £1,000 attachment fee and then an additional £800 per family (PBR) for successful outcomes.

¹⁰ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410715/Final_The_Benefits_of_the_Troubled_Families_Programme_to_the_Taxpayer.pdf