Understanding Troubled Families

Foreword

The task of the Troubled Families programme is primarily about intervening and getting things to change in families who are struggling, where there is chaos and where kids are at risk of leading similarly difficult lives as their parents.

But it's also a golden opportunity to have an in-depth look at what is really happening in the lives of some of the most difficult and often elusive families – and try to understand what problems they face and how they may have become entrenched in such difficulty.

Having a greater understanding of troubled families means that we can also understand more about why services, who have often spent vast amounts of time and money on these families, have failed to bring about lasting change.

This report sets out the range and level of problems that troubled families who are part of the programme are experiencing. It presents a stark yet complex picture. To qualify for help as part of the Troubled Families programme there must be problems such as truancy, worklessness, crime and anti-social behaviour. However, the number, range and breadth of problems revealed illustrates just how complex and difficult these families' lives are. On average nine serious problems exist in any one family at one time. With just one or two of these problems being enough for a family to struggle, having nine problems makes it unsurprising that families are often in chaos and can't see a way out.

Also particularly striking is the level of mental and physical health problems for both adults and their children, with 71% of families having poor health, 46% having a mental health problem and 32% a long standing illness or disability. What is also worrying is the level at which this is found in the children in these households – with over a third of children suffering from mental health problems and a fifth a long standing illness or disability.

The scale of violence in the home, which has been spoken of to me on many occasions by family workers, is also laid bare. Three out of ten families were experiencing domestic violence – something we believe to be an underestimate as violence is often unreported at first.

These are statistics to be concerned about. But developing this knowledge about families means that we can understand more about how we need to approach families and offer help that has the best chance of working. Not only for their sake, but also recognising how expensive it is not to get the help we offer right.

If there is any doubt about the strain on public services put on services by troubled families we need look no further than the number of police call outs this research outlines. Almost half of families had at least one police callout to the home in the last six months. In total there were 6,209 police call outs recorded in total in the previous six months to 1,316 families, an average of five callouts per family. One family had 90 police call outs in six months, and 21 families had more than 30 callouts in six months – more than once a week.

So with this information about the level of problems families have and the strain they put on services, we can seek to draw some conclusions about our response to troubled families. The multiplicity and layering of problems that this report sets out means that services simply carrying on as they were before will find it hard to reach or help troubled families.

Having so many different problems within a household unit is very likely to make each individual problem more difficult to tackle. Individuals within families do not operate in isolation and the problems of one will affect another, reinforcing each other and therefore likely to build up and lead to a family becoming dysfunctional.

Yet services have traditionally dealt with individuals – not families – and worked on a 'presenting' or dominating problem, not the interconnected and layered problems and dynamics which means the unit as a whole, and the individuals within it, are sinking. With many services circling families, working with individuals within the family or individual problems it can mean families are only contained in their difficulties, often lurching from from crisis to crisis.

The insight this research offers us only underlines my conviction that services must look at and work with a family as a whole. This is what the troubled families programme has advocated and we are seeing results: 111,000 families have so far been identified as needing help, and 97,000 are being worked with. Almost 53,000 families have made significant progress so that they now have their kids back in school, crime and anti-social behaviour is stopping or they are getting back to work. But we need to make this way of working the norm, so that we don't risk failing families who need us; and so that we get them the help they need to find a way out of this cycle of despair and give their children a better chance in the future.

Louise Casey CB

Head of the Troubled Families Programme

The Troubled Families Programme

Troubled families are families who both have problems and often cause problems - where children are truanting or excluded, where there is youth crime or anti-social behaviour and where parents are not working. They also tend to have other problems including domestic violence or drug or alcohol abuse. In addition to the obvious human costs of this, families also costs local services, and the taxpayer, a lot of time and money – which was adding up to a burden on the public purse of an estimated £9billion a year.

In December 2010, the Prime Minister set the ambitious goal of turning around the lives of 120,000 troubled families by 2015. To drive this forward, the Troubled Families Programme, led by Louise Casey CB and reporting to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, was launched in April 2012, backed by £448 million drawn from the budgets of six government departments.

All 152 upper tier local authorities in England signed up to the Troubled Families Programme and as a result they are not only helping families turn their lives around but also are changing the way they work with families and bringing down the amount of money public services need to spend reacting to their problems.

To be targeted for help under the Troubled Families Programme, families have to meet three of the four following criteria:

- Are involved in youth crime or anti-social behaviour

- Have children who are regularly truanting or not in school

- Have an adult on out of work benefits

- Cause high costs to the taxpayer

Local authorities receive a contribution from Government of up to £4,000 per family for getting children from troubled families back into school, reducing youth crime and anti-social behaviour and getting adults in the families on the path to work or into a job[i].

Two years on from the start of the Troubled Families Programme, the latest data shows:

- 111,574 families have been identified for help;

- 97,202 families are being worked with in the programme; and

- 52,833 families have now been turned around.

Working with troubled families

The Troubled Families programme promotes a different approach to working with families in order to help them to change or turn their lives around:

- By working with the whole family in a way which recognises they interact and influence each other rather than viewing them as individuals with problems;

- Using a dedicated worker or dedicated team to get to the underlying problems, rather than individual services responding to the presenting problem of each family member;

- By developing a relationship with the family, being persistent and building trust with them in order to challenge them to make the changes they need to, step by step, rather than containing and monitoring their problems;

- And, where necessary, drawing in specialist services in a sequenced way at the right time for the family rather than services being available on the basis of meeting thresholds and availability.

Through working with families this way, problems such as domestic violence, dysfunctional relationships, mental and physical health problems can be addressed, families can start to function and the outward manifestations of those problems start to improve – children are back in school, there is reduced crime and anti-social behaviour, parents can start to think about their future, training and preparation for work.[1]

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[1] For further information on how best to work with troubled families and the evidence base behind the approach, see https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-with-troubled-families-a-guide-to-evidence-and-good-practice

About the Family Monitoring Data

As part of the national evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme[ii], each of the 152 upper tier local authorities were asked to randomly select at least 10% of the families they have started work with so far and provide information about their profile and their problems on entry to the programme. This included information on **employment, education, crime, housing, child protection, parenting and health**, in order to capture the range of problems present.

Ecorys, our independent evaluation partner, collected, cleaned and analysed the data. A report setting out the more detailed initial findings is available[iii]. Although local authorities were asked to randomly select the sample of families for monitoring purposes, it is not possible to be certain that families were chosen randomly in all cases.   For example, the findings may be more likely to include families which local authorities have more data about[iv]. The findings are based on the first batch of data submitted by local authorities and we expect the quality of information to improve as areas improve their data collection systems. It should also be noted that not all the characteristics described here will necessarily be representative across the whole 120,000 families who will be helped by the Troubled Families programme over its lifetime.

However, this is a very rich source of data and represents a significant proportion of all eligible troubled families from across England. Information was submitted by 133 authorities, a return rate of 89% and covers 8,447 families comprising 11,449 adults and 16,277 children, which represents 11% of the families worked with over this period[v.]

Family Monitoring Data will continue to be collected as part of the ongoing national evaluation.

This report

This report describes the families who entered the Troubled Families Programme up to December 2013, examining some of the problems they had at the point at which local authorities started working with them as part of the programme. It also discusses the implications of these findings and how local authorities are now changing the way they work with families.

Key family statistics

- Families had on average **nine problems** related to employment, education, crime, housing, child protection, parenting or health on entry to the programme. This is based on those families for which full data were available across every problem (1048 families) **[i]**

The findings show that on entry to the programme, that the sample of troubled families had the following characteristics[vi]

- **40%** had **3 or more children,** compared to 16% nationally[vii].[viii]

- **49%** were **lone parent households,** compared to 16% nationally[ix]

- **82% of families had a problem related to education** – such as persistent unauthorised absence, exclusion from school or being out of mainstream education

- **71% of families had a health problem**

- **54%** of families were involved in **crime or anti-social behaviour**

- **42%** of families had had **police called out** to their address in the previous six months.

- **29%** of troubled families were **experiencing** domestic violence or abuse on entry to the programme. National estimates put the level of domestic violence among individuals at around 7% in a year[x]

- Over **a third of families (35%)** had a child who was either a Child in Need, subject to child protection arrangements or where a child had been taken into care

- **One-in-five (22%) had been at risk of eviction** in the previous six months

- In nearly **three-quarters of families** (74%) families there was **no one in work** compared to 17% of households nationally[xi].

- In **83% of families, an adult was receiving and out-of-work benefit** – compared to around 11% of the population nationally[xii].

- **70%** were living in **social housing** compared to 18% of the population nationally.[xiii]

What does this tell us about troubled families?

Multiple and layered problems

By their nature, families who are eligible for help as part of the troubled families programme will have problems. However the findings from this new data are striking in both the number and breadth of problems families face. This enables us to better understand the scale of the challenges facing families, the consequences for their future life chances and the difficulties faced by public services trying to help them.

For any family facing just one or two of the problems of the type highlighted above there is a higher risk of poor outcomes for their children. For example, truancy and parental unemployment tend to increase the likelihood of a child or young person becoming a NEET (that is a 16-24 year-old not in employment, education or training)[xiv] with all the disadvantages this brings. However for troubled families, with an average of nine problems, the cumulative effect of these problems is likely to make it more difficult to get that child back into school, to tackle criminal behaviour or get a parent into work.

It is usual for data about issues such as crime, school attendance problems, health and employment to be collected at an individual adult or child level. However, the Family Monitoring Data is collected at family level. Looking at problems at family level provides a different perspective, allowing an insight into how problems cluster within families and the challenges facing the family as a whole. This reflects the family-focused nature of the Troubled Families Programme itself, which recognises that family relationships and circumstances are very important influences on an individual and therefore seeks to work in a 'whole family' way to help families overcome their problems.

To qualify for help under the Troubled Families Programme, families need to have at least three problems related to children not being in school, youth crime or anti-social behaviour, worklessness, or being high cost to public services locally. . However, the analysis shows that that families have many more problems than this, with on average, nine different problems within each family[xv]. Therefore in addition to the expected problems such as crime, truancy or exclusion from school and unemployment, families are also living with a very high incidence of health problems, both in adults and children, there are significant problems around the parenting of children as well as considerable child protection concerns and a quarter of families had three or more education-related problems. All this reveals a complex and multi-layered picture of families who have qualified for help.

Having so many different problems within a household unit is very likely to make each individual problem more difficult to tackle. Individuals within families do not operate in isolation and the problems of one will affect another, reinforcing each other and therefore likely to have a serious and cumulative effect on a family's ability to function. These families therefore present a complex challenge to public services.

The data shows the presence of multiple problems in a household but, interestingly, there is no single stand-out issue that might be described as the underlying problem or root cause.

Links between problems

While there is no dominating issue, there are **clearly associations between different issues** with some problems being associated with the presence of other problems. For example, further analysis of the data[xvi] indicates that certain adult problems are strongly associated with problems affecting children in the family. For instance, having an adult in the household who had a recent proven offence was associated with:

- Having a child in care; 8%[xvii] had one or more children in care, compared with 5% of households with no adult offenders.

- Having a child with special educational needs (SEN); 39% of households had one or more children with SEN, compared with 34% of households with no adult offenders.

- Having NEETs in the household; 36% had one or more young people (up to age 25) not in education, employment or training – compared with 22% of households with no proven adult offenders.

In some cases, **one problem may be a manifestation of another**. Our analysis shows, for example, a significant association between behavioural problems in school and youth crime; 53% of households with one or more young people with a recent proven offence also had a child with school behavioural problems – where this may have been one child with both problems, or siblings with co-occurring problems. Similarly, 62% of families experiencing domestic violence had a truanting child compared to 54% where there was no domestic violence and 39% of families experiencing domestic violence also had a young offender compared to 31% where there was no domestic violence. There may be many explanations for these problems manifesting together, for example a child being too afraid to go to school for fear of leaving their mother in the house when she is experiencing domestic violence, or a young person starting to commit crime associated with growing up in a violent household.

Among families with this level of difficulties, some problems are likely to be **both cause and effect of troubled families' circumstances** – domestic violence, chaotic lifestyles and disrupted childhoods are all likely to manifest themselves in mental and physical ill-health: 60% of families experiencing domestic violence included an adult with a mental health problem compared with 40% in families where there was no domestic violence; and

41% of families where there was domestic violence included a child with a mental health problem compared with 28% without a domestic violence problem.

In the same way, mental and physical health problems in adults may make it more difficult to undertake everyday tasks and keep to routines, affecting parenting and other vital roles. These in turn can lead to concerns about child welfare or the onset of anti-social behaviour in children and young people.

Links between parent and child problems

Analysis of the data illustrates how **problems in adults are also apparent in children in the same family.** For example, there is a significant association between youth offending and adult offending in families: 37% of households with an adult offender also had a youth offender, compared with 31% of households with no proven adult offenders.

Similarly, 45% of households with an adult involved in anti-social behaviour also had a young person involved in anti-social behaviour, compared with just 20% of households where no adult was involved in anti-social behaviour.

Similarly, in families where adults had a **substance misuse problem**, it was more likely there would be children with substance misuse problems. For example, 23% of families with an adult drug user in this sample also had a child with a substance misuse problem compared to 13% where there was no adult drug user. And 20% of families with an adult with an alcohol misuse problem had a child who was substance misusing compared to 13% families where there was no adult misusing alcohol.

Family Characteristics and problems

Certain family characteristics tended to be associated with certain problems in some families. For example, in families with more than three children there was a higher association with child protection concerns and a higher incidence of domestic violence, with 27% of families with one or two children being subject to domestic violence compared with 32% for those with three or more children. These findings are consistent with findings from other research which shows the risks of domestic violence increase with the number of children.[xviii] In this sample there was also a statistically significant association between having more than three children and there being an adult with a recent criminal conviction.

The data shows that having a child under five is also associated with a higher incidence of child protection concerns, with having an adult with a recent proven offence and domestic violence – 37% of families with children under five were known to be experiencing domestic violence compared with 26% of those without a child under five.

Police Call Outs and related problems

Another interesting pattern is that **police call outs** to the family's address in the last six months was strongly associated with other problems. It was for example, strongly associated with problems in school for this group of families. For example:

- 67% of families where it was recorded that police had been called out included a child who had high levels of absence from school;
- 62% included children with behavioural problems in school; and
- 36% included a child in a pupil referral unit or other alternative provision.

There is also a crossover between the presence of domestic violence and calls on the police service. In 43% of families where there had been a police call out, domestic violence was also present compared to 22% of households with no police call outs.

The fact that police call outs were so prevalent in this cohort of troubled families – with over 6,000 police call outs for 1,338 families in the past six months - highlights the type of reactive demands the multiple problems of these families place on public services.

The association between police call outs and other problems suggest it can be an indicator of other problems. Some local authorities with their partners are using data on police call outs as important intelligence that signals potential wider difficulties in a household, whether or not those call outs result in no further action or in a crime being committed.

The data reveals very significant problems in these households – problems which on their own are associated with poor outcomes for children and disadvantage in later life. But they should not be seen in isolation from one another. Without effective intervention the chances of these children overcoming disadvantage are stacked against them.

Working differently with families - the Troubled Families approach

In families where there are problems of this magnitude – school exclusion, long term illness, a child committing crime, children who are of concern to social services or domestic violence – there will usually be many different public services who will be or should be concerned about that family and their level of 'risk'. Public services have tended to address and react to each problem in isolation and with individual family members, which in the context of troubled families, may often mean upwards of eight services working with a family or individuals within it. This is likely to result in duplication of services going into the family at high cost. But perhaps even more importantly, this approach is not likely to work because tackling the 'presenting' or dominating problem is unlikely to get to the root causes. And where that presenting problem is associated with an individual, rather than also looking at what else is happening in that family, the whole picture is being neglected.

A much more systematic approach from public services is required in order to work effectively with these families. And, through the Troubled Families Programme, local authorities and their partners are changing the way services are delivered to troubled families.

Understanding families first

The first vital component of this new approach is about **managing families proactively**. Many are chaotic and struggle to function day to day whether as a cause or effect of their experiences and problems. So without some help to stabilise them and help them function, little progress can be made.

For these families it is important to establish what is happening in their lives aside from the list of individual problems identified by different agencies; to see the wider family dynamics and how they themselves see their problems and the causes of their problems. This ability to look from '**inside out rather than outside in'** has been identified as a crucial element of **family intervention,** an approach to working with families endorsed by the Troubled Families Programme.[xix]

Looking beyond thresholds and individual problems

Families involved with different services are likely to present different levels of risk according to the various services' own priorities and thresholds. Families may be just below several services' thresholds for intervention but across their different problems cumulatively present significant **overall risks.** Getting a single view of a family which looks across their problems and identifies that for example, a former partner is about to leave prison, may completely change what needs to happen for that family to avoid potential violence returning to the household.

This need to look beyond particular service or departmental criteria or thresholds, to look across the family's circumstances, to seek out risks, and to be curious about the family, can be difficult for services to adjust to. However, this approach is far more likely to result in a better overall understanding of the family, the root causes of their problems and therefore lead to a more effective way to support them to change – providing longer term benefits for all concerned.

Information Sharing

Linked to this is the importance of systematic sharing of information to provide a more complete picture of the family, to ascertain which other public services are working with that family and what their involvement is seeking to achieve. Families often become subject to different services' processes and assessments without anyone having a clear picture of what is happening overall for that family and what needs to change. This is likely to result in the family also being unclear about what is going wrong for them as a whole and what they need to do to turn things around.

The need to share information much more systematically is a challenge across public services and in central government, where there remains a tendency to work in silos. However sharing of information is vital if services are to change how they work with families who have differing problems – to both identify duplication of services but also to understand more fully what is happening with those families.

In recognition of this, the Troubled Families Programme has driven changes in current data sharing arrangements. For example, regulatory changes have been made to enable benefits information to be shared between Job Centre Plus and local authorities so they

can identify households in receipt of out of work benefits who – coupled with other problems – might need help. Similarly, there are now protocols in place setting out the legal basis for the police to share youth crime and anti-social behaviour data with local authorities.

Further analysis of problems and characteristics
This section looks in more detail at the types of problems facing families within the Troubled Families Programme.

<u>**Family profile**</u>
- Families have on average **2.5 children** compared to 1.7 children nationally[xx]
- **40%** of families had **three or more children** compared to 16% nationally[xxi]
- **25%** have children **under five** years old
- **49%** are **lone parent households,** compared to 16% nationally
- Ethnicity was recorded for the main carer in the family for which **78% were recorded as White, British.**

Almost a half of families are headed by a lone parent. On average families have 2.5 children, although this includes some children between 16 and 18. Four out of 10 families have three or more children.

As the criteria for eligibility for help under the troubled families programme includes school attendance and youth crime, there is likely to be a greater concentration of school-age children and those above the age of criminal responsibility among the families who are going through the programme. However, the data shows that in 25% of the families there is at least one child under five.

Local authorities are asked to collect data only relating to those who are living in the same house on entry to the programme. For many however, 'family' represents a wider group of individuals – for example, an absent father, children who live with another parent, a previous partner or relative and some children who may be in care or who have left home and live independently. It was not possible to capture all this information within this data but other aspects of the Troubled Families evaluation will ask families within the programme about family members who are not living in the home.

School and education

82% of families have a significant problem with education. This is unsurprising given that specific concerns around schooling can result in eligibility for entry to the programme. However, the data suggests a significant level of education challenges and problems facing the children in troubled families.

- **39% families include a child with special educational needs (SEN).** Nationally, 19%[xxii] of pupils have a special educational need, suggesting that troubled families have double the level of identified SEN as the general population.

- **46% families included a child with a behavioural problem** as assessed by their school.

- **56%** of families include a child who has persistent unauthorised absence **from school** (the official measure for persistent unauthorised absence is 85% attendance or less). To put this into context, nationally **around 5%[xxiii] of pupils are persistent absentees.**

- **30% have children with a fixed-term exclusion** and **16%** have children who are **permanently excluded**. The information shows that there were 908 children who were permanently excluded from school in this cohort of families. To put this figure into context, **5,000 permanent exclusions were made** in England in 2012, the last year for which figures are available.

- Over a **quarter of families (28%) have children attending a pupil referral unit** (PRU) or some form of alternative provision. The total number of children in this sample attending a Pupil Referral Unit or other 'alternative' provision is 1,621 out of a total of 5,331 families.

While a high proportion of education related problems are to be expected given the entry criteria for the programme, over a **quarter of families** had **three or more of these education issues** indicating more deep seated problems and suggesting that these are children at high risk of becoming NEETS.

<u>Crime anti-social behaviour</u>

In total, 53% of families had been involved in crime and anti-social behaviour in the preceding six months.

- **36% of families** include a young person who has a proven offence in the past six months.

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  26% included a young person involved in **anti-social behaviour** and **11% an adult involved** in anti-social behaviour in the last six months.

- **15% of families** include an **adult** with a proven offence **in the last six months**.

- **6% are identified as having a prolific and priority offender (PPO)** in the household. This is someone identified by police and partners as committing a disproportionate amount of crime who and will be designated as a PPO under their local integrated offender management programme.

- Approaching a **half of families (42%) had at least one police call out** to the home in the last six months. In total there were 6,209 police call outs recorded in total in the previous six months to 1,316 families, an average of five call outs per family. One family had 90 police call outs in six months, and 21 families had more than 30 callouts in six months – more than once a week.

The data shows that above and beyond the entry criteria to the programme, crime and anti-social behaviour feature significantly in the life of these families. In addition, as the further analysis shows, the presence of an adult in a household being involved in crime makes it more likely that a child or young person in that family will also be involved in crime.

Domestic violence

29% of families were known to be experiencing domestic violence or abuse on entry to the programme. National estimates suggest that 7% of individuals experience domestic violence in a year[xxiv] and, although this is individual and not family level data, it does suggest that violence is significantly more concentrated in this cohort of families.

In addition, the Family Monitoring Data is likely to be an underestimate of the levels of violence experienced by troubled families. Domestic violence is known to be under-reported more generally[xxv] and in a survey of troubled family co-ordinators (who implement the work with families in local authorities), 60% said that fewer than half of the cases that involved domestic violence were known about at the point of referral.

The prevalence of domestic violence experienced by families has frequently been cited by troubled families co-ordinators as a major concern, one now borne out by this data, which will become a focus of the expanded troubled families programme.

Parenting and child protection

The problems in troubled families often affect the ability of parents to care for their children. For example **66% of families** were assessed by a key worker as having **parenting difficulties**. Key workers work intensively with families as part of the family intervention approach.

Of this sample, **23% have children identified as a Child in Need**. These are children who under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 have been identified by children's services as being likely to have their health and development impaired without support. In practice the majority of children identified as children in need are on the grounds of abuse, neglect or family dysfunction. In this sample **2,424 children were identified as children in need in 1,196 families**. In 48% of these cases there was more than one child in need within the family.

Where concerns are very serious, children can become the subject of a child protection plan under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989. These are children who require protection from neglect or emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

In this sample 12% of families are children on a child protection plan. **This totaled 1,420 children in 623 families**. In 62% of these cases, there was more than one child in a family subject to a child protection plan.

The data shows that 6% of troubled families have children who are being looked after by the local authority – **482 children in this sample were in care**. The data does not provide enough information to identify when these children went in to care but is unlikely to encompass children who were taken into care many years ago (as they would no longer be considered part of the household for the purposes of the family monitoring data).

A significant proportion of families have been assessed by the key worker as having parenting problems. The experience of the Troubled Families Programme is that many parents in these families do not have experience of being parented well themselves. Practical help with setting routines and boundaries for children and giving praise is a core part of how family intervention key workers support families.

A significant proportion of troubled families contain very vulnerable children. That over one third of families include a child who has been identified as a child in need, on a child protection plan or who has been taken into care suggests a high crossover between the children that social services are most concerned about nationally and the troubled families population.

Health

The data reveal a startling level of health problems within families: **71% of families have a health problem.**

46% of families have adults suffering from a mental health problem. A third of families have a clinical diagnosis of a mental health problem[xxvi].

32% have adults with a long-standing illness or disability. As context 19% of the general population have a long-standing illness or disability.[xxvii] As the general population includes a significant proportion of older people who are more likely to have long standing illnesses or disabilities, this suggests that disability and illness is significantly over

represented in these families. For example in the general population only 6% of 25-34 year-olds and 12% of 35-49 year-olds have a long standing illness or disability[xxviii].

14% of families include an adult dependent on alcohol and 13% dependent on drugs[xxix]. As context, there is a national estimate that 4% of people in England are alcohol dependent[xxx]. In this sample 4% of families were receiving treatment for alcohol dependency, a reflection of very severe alcohol problems.

Physical and mental health problems are also manifest in children in this sample of families.

- **A third (33%) have children suffering from a mental health problem**[xxxi]. 20% of the cohort had a clinical diagnosis. It is not possible to make a direct comparison with the population nationally but the Mental Health Foundation estimates that 10% of children have a mental health problem at any one time. [xxxii]

- **One-in-five (20%) have children who have been clinically diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**. As context between 2 and 5% of children in the UK population are estimated as having ADHD.[xxxiii]

- **One-in-five (20%) have children with long-standing illness or disability**. At the time or writing there was no published comparison for this information.

- **One-in-seven (15%) have children with a substance misuse problem** which meets the threshold for treatment. Again there is no published comparison for this.

- **One-in-twenty (5%)** families included an under **18 year old who was pregnant**.

The prevalence of health problems among families has meant in some areas dedicated health workers being integrated into family intervention teams who are working with troubled families. The expanded Troubled Families Programme will make physical and mental health problems a focus of work to help families.

Work

More than four fifths **(83%)** of families included someone receiving an **out of work benefit**. No one was working in **three quarters of the families**, which compares to 17% of households nationally. Of the lone parent families in this group, 83% were not working, compared to 36% of lone parent families nationally. So it appears that this group of families is particularly far from the labour market on entry to the programme.

A quarter of families include a 16-24 year-old who is not in employment, education or training (NEET). One-in-five of these families include **more than one young person who is NEET**.

There is no national information at family level on NEETs and therefore it is not possible to identify the extent to which this is a disproportionate figure. However, those who are not in education, employment or training in this age group have a very high risk of future unemployment and being NEET is associated with early motherhood for young women[xxxiv].

Housing circumstances

More than two thirds **(70%)** are living in social housing compared to 17% of the population nationally. While **18%** are renting privately which is in line with the national average, only **5%** of the sample are **owner-occupiers** and **6%** are recorded as living in **temporary accommodation** suggesting they are homeless households**.**

In terms of housing problems, over **a quarter (27%) are in rent arrears** and one-in-five families **(21%) were at risk of eviction**[xxxv].

Social housing providers were among the early pioneers of family intervention work and the high proportions of families living in social housing who are at risk of losing their homes through rent arrears or other problems suggests an important role for social housing providers in their local troubled families programme .

Conclusion

The data reveals very significant problems in these households. These are problems which, on their own, are associated with poor outcomes for children and disadvantage in later life and therefore suggests the need for swift and effective interventions to help families. Their problems should not be seen in isolation from one another. Indeed one of the clear findings from this report is that these are not freestanding problems but are likely to be inter-connected and overlapping.

The multiple problems faced by troubled families underlines the importance of taking a different approach to how they should be worked with. Public services tend to work with individuals and single problems, but with troubled families it is necessary to look beyond the presenting or dominating problem of one individual and instead look across the family to identify what is happening with them as a whole. In the same way, public services need to have a full picture of the services that are being provided to the family as a whole. If not, different services may be working to different ends with different family members. Without such an approach, it is unlikely that families with so many difficulties and problems will be effectively helped.

The Family Monitoring Data will continue to be collected as part of the ongoing national evaluation and will be used to shape the development of the expanded Troubled Families Programme from 2015.

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[i] For further details of the operation of the Troubled Families programme please refer to the financial framework for the payment-by-results scheme for local authorities, which can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-troubled-families-programme-financial-framework

[ii] The Independent National Evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme is being carried out by a consortium led by Ecorys UK Ltd and including Bryson Purdon Social Research, Clarissa White Research, Ipsos MORI, National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) and The Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education.

[iii] National Evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme Interim Report: Family Monitoring Data. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-troubled-families-turn-their-lives-around

[iv] This is set out in more detail in the technical annex.

[v] A weighting variable was applied so that local authorities that had over or under sampled for this survey were correctly represented in the results.

[i] This average is based on 1,048 families where the data were complete across all 35 variables. It is important to note that this is based on **only a sixth** of the families included on the database and is more likely to include families where the quality of data is better. It may not be representative of families on the programme or in the larger sample. See the Ecorys report for a full breakdown of base sizes.

[vi] These figures are based on data for the weighted sample of 6577 families, although because of missing data the base numbers for the percentages included in the bullets vary. The base numbers can be found in the Ecorys report.

[vii] National figures, where available, have been provided to provide context. However not all national figures are directly comparable as some information is not available by household or only available for the United Kingdom as a whole rather than England.

[viii] England & Wales. Source: ONS 2012 Family Size http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/family-size/2012/family-size-rpt.html

[ix] United Kingdom, Source: ONS 2013 http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/families-and-households/2013/stb-families.html

[x] See for example: http://www.womensaid.org.uk/domestic_violence_topic.asp?section=0001000100220036

[xi] Working and Workless households 2013 ONS statistical bulletin http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171778_325269.pdf

[xii] 5.3 million working-age people were in receipt of an out-of-work benefit in February 2011 http://www.poverty.org.uk/13/index.shtml

[xiii] England & Wales. Source: ONS 2011 http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/detailed-characteristics-on-housing-for-local-authorities-in-england-and-wales/short-story-on-detailed-characteristics.html

[xiv] Literature Review of the Costs of Being "Not in Education, Employment Or Training" at Age 16-18 (Coles et al., 2002)

[xv] The median number of problems is also nine.

[xvi] Bivariate analysis was carried out which included statistical significance testing to test which characteristics or problems were associated. Associations with a P-value of 0.05 or less were reported. This means that the likelihood that any observed associations occurred by chance alone is less than 5%. See separate technical annex.

[xvii] All figures are statistically significant within this group.

[xviii] A correlation has been found between large family size and domestic violence. See for example: Krug, Etienne G.; World Health Organization (2002). *World Report on Violence and Health*. World Health Organization. p. 102. ISBN 978-92-4-154561-7.

[xix] *Working with Troubled Families* DCLG (2013) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-with-troubled-families-a-guide-to-evidence-and-good-practice

[xx] UK. ONS Family Size Statistics 2012 www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/family.../family-size-rpt.html

[xxi] *Ibid*

[xxii] Department for Education 2012 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/219510/sfr24-2012c1.pdf

[xxiii] Department for Education (2013) https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221799/sfr10-2013.pdf

[xxiv] See for example ONS Statistical Bulletin: Focus on: Violent Crime and Sexual Offences, 2011/12 (2013)

[xxv] *Ibid.*

[xxvi] Authorities were asked whether there was a clinical diagnosis or whether in the assessment of the family's key worker there was a mental health problem.

[xxvii] Based on England and Wales. Census 2011 See: http://data.jrf.org.uk/data/rate-disability-time/

[xxviii] *Ibid.*

[xxix] This represents a combination of clinical diagnosis and key worker assessment

[xxx] 1.6 million considered to have some degree of alcohol dependency http://www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/alcoholcommentary2013final.pdf

[xxxi] Combination of clinical diagnosis and key worker assessment

[xxxii] Mental Health Foundation http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/help-information/mental-health-statistics/

[xxxiii] http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder/Pages/Introduction.aspx

[xxxiv] Literature Review of the Costs of Being "Not in Education, Employment Or Training" at Age 16-18 (Coles et al., 2002)

[xxxv] There are no reliable published statistics on rent arrears and risk of eviction