Department for
Communities and
Local Government

National evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme 2015 - 2020: family outcomes – national and local datasets: part 1

Presented to Parliament pursuant to Section (3) 6
of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016

April 2017

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National evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme 2015 - 2020: family outcomes – national and local datasets: part 1

Analysis and Data Directorate

Department for Communities and Local Government

April 2017

Executive summary

This report includes the early findings from the national evaluation.

The findings are based on data submitted by local authorities as well as data matched to national administrative datasets (on around 60,000 families on entry to the programme) and presented under each of the six headline domains on which families are selected for inclusion in the programme.

Key findings:

Troubled families on the programme were typically larger in size, with more dependent children, were more likely to be lone parent families and have a child under the age of five than families in the general population.

Individuals on the programme were significantly more complex than individuals in the general population:

- Adults were six times more likely to be claiming benefits in the last year.
- Children were twice as likely to be persistently absent in the last school year (10% or more of school sessions missed).
- Children were twelve times more likely to be classified as a Child in Need[1] in the last year.
- Two in five families had a family member with a mental health issue.
- Adults were five times more likely to have had a proven offence in the last year.
- One in four families had a family member affected by an incident of domestic abuse.

Being a troubled family was strongly associated with financial exclusion, education and attendance strongly related to children needing help, and domestic abuse strongly related to crime and anti-social behaviour and children needing help.

If a family was affected by domestic abuse, individual(s) within that family were much more likely to have a mental-health problem.

1 Children in need (CIN) are defined under the Children Act 1989 as: a child who is unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services, or the child is disabled. The Children In Need data includes looked after children, children on a Child Protection Plan and those with a Special Educational Need (SEN).

Introduction

This short report includes early findings from the national evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme. The findings incorporate baseline data of families who joined the programme between September 2014 and December 2015 and were matched to national datasets. The results include the characteristics of families on the programme, the problems they face on entry to the programme, the complexity of these problems and the relationship between these problems.

This report brings together the findings from:

The National Impact Study (NIS) where details of families on the programme, provided by local authorities, are matched to data in administrative datasets held by Government departments. These datasets include the Police National Computer (PNC) held by Ministry of Justice, The National Pupil Database (NPD) held by Department for Education and the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) held by Department for Work and Pensions.

Family Progress Data (FPD) is provided by local authorities directly to DCLG and includes data that is not held in national administrative datasets. This includes some individual level and some family level data on anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse, police callouts, dependence on non-prescription drugs or alcohol, issues with mental health, presence of NEETs[2], those missing from education and issues relating to housing.

The National Impact Study and Family Progress Data include data on the same families. We received data from local authorities on 63,671 families and once matched to nationally held datasets this reduced to 61,664 families. The data gathered for the evaluation includes families who joined the programme between September 2014 and December 2015:

	No. of individuals	No. of families
National Impact Study (matched and unmatched)	253,230	63,671
National Impact Study (matched only)	187,097	61,664
Family Progress Data	230,858	58,566

Local authorities are asked to submit data every six months on all the families eligible for and engaged by the programme[3] to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). This report contains only data about those currently engaged with the programme. There are some issues with data quality that should be noted when interpreting the results:

2 NEET stands for Not in Employment, Education or Training. Only those aged between 16 and 24 inclusive can be NEET.

3 Local authorities submit data on all families eligible for the programme who are currently engaged and waiting to join the programme. This provides the evaluators with the ability to compare the outcomes of families in the treatment and comparison group.

- High match rates are dependent on the quality of the personal data supplied by local authorities.
- The data matching methodology is different in each Government department (they have their own matching algorithms) and results in differing match rates. It should be noted that caution needs to be taken when interpreting the results.
- Only people with a criminal history will be matched to the Police National Computer. This means the match rate is lower for the Police National Computer than for the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study and National Pupil Database.

The numbers and match rates of those on the programme are below:

Dataset	No. of individuals matched	% of individuals matched
National Pupil Database (NPD)	92,759	84.3%
Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS)	74,635	76.1%
Police National Computer (PNC)	29,824	18.6%

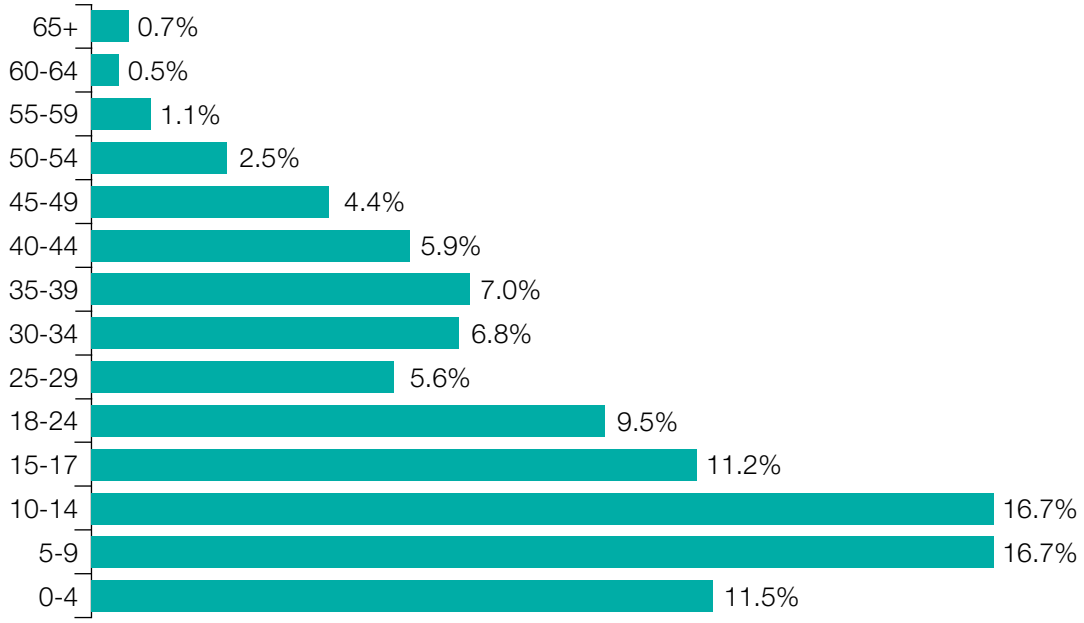
In order to provide national comparisons, indicative national prevalence estimates for the relevant reference population have been taken from national statistics produced by other Government departments including the Department for Education, Department for Work and Pensions and Ministry of Justice. These national comparison figures are for England unless otherwise stated.

Troubled families demographics and characteristics

Data on family demographics/characteristics is taken from the National Impact Study and the Family Progress Data. The base numbers are reported below and vary according to the quality of the data.

The majority of adults on the programme were aged between 25-44 years old, with the majority of children aged 10 or under. The age range of individuals on the programme is illustrated in the chart below:

Chart 1: The age range of individuals in troubled families



Based on all individuals on the programme. Base number 246,098.

Nearly two thirds of adults in troubled families were women and just over half of children in troubled families were male. See table below for the results of males and females in families on the programme.

Table 1: Gender of adults and children in troubled families

	% of males	% of females	Base No.
Adults	35.3*	64.7*	86,853
Children	53.7**	46.3**	122,514

** Based on all individuals in the treatment group aged 18-100 with gender data.*

*** Based on all individuals in the treatment group age 0-17 with gender data.*

Just over four fifths of individuals on the programme are white, with a large minority from other ethnic backgrounds.

Table 2: Ethnicity of troubled families

	% of individuals
White	81.3%
Non-white	18.7%
White	81.3%
Asian	5.9%
Black	6.1%
Mixed	5.4%
Chinese/other	1.3%
Base No.	204,322

Based on individuals on the programme where ethnicity is known.

Troubled families were typically larger in size, with more dependent children, were more likely to be lone parent families and have a child under the age of five than families in the general population. Families on the programme were over three times more likely to be lone parent families than English households in the general population.

National averages have been included in the table below to compare the families on the programme to families in the general population, but it should be noted that the programme is likely to include a higher proportion of lone parents because it targets families at risk of financial exclusion.

Table 3: Characteristics of families on the programme compared to the general population

	Among troubled families	National prevalence
Proportion of families with at least one child aged under 5	40.1%	17.4%
Average size of family	4.0	2.9
Average number of dependent children in a family	2.2	1.7
Proportion of lone parent families	60.4%	16.0%

Based on all families (matched & unmatched) in the treatment group who have data for each variable, therefore bases are different due to the amount of missing data.

Headline problems faced by troubled families

In the year before their intervention, troubled families experienced a range of problems. The problems these families experienced are presented below under each of the six headline domains on which families would have been selected for inclusion on the programme:

1. ***Worklessness and Financial Exclusion*** – Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion, or young people at risk of worklessness.
2. ***Education and School Attendance*** – Children not attending school regularly.
3. ***Children Who Need Help*** – Children of all ages, who need help, identified as in need or subject to a Child Protection Plan.
4. ***Health*** – Parents or children with a range of health problems (including drug or alcohol abuse).
5. ***Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour*** – Parents or children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.
6. ***Domestic Abuse*** – Families affected by domestic violence and abuse.

The data presented in the tables below highlighted in bold text relate to the outcomes of particular interest to the programme.

1. Worklessness and financial exclusion

The data from the National Impact Study showed that almost three quarters of adults in troubled families were claiming benefits in the year before joining the programme – this is more than six times the national rate. Adults in troubled families were nine times more likely to be claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) than those in the general population and over a third of families had an adult claiming Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Incapacity Benefit (IB).

Table 4: Adults out of work (from Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study)

Among troubled families in this cohort, in the year before starting on the programme, % of:		Base	Indicative national prevalence*
Families with an adult claiming benefits**	**80.3%**	**52,691**	**Not available**
Adults claiming benefits**	**71.4%**	**73,389**	**11.8%**
Adults claiming Employment and Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefit (ESA/IB)	27.3%	73,389	5.8%
Families claiming Employment and Support Allowance or Incapacity Benefit (ESA/IB)	34.9%	52,691	Not available
Adults claiming Income Support (IS)	29.1%	73,389	1.8%
Adults claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)	18.7%	73,389	2.2%
Families who are workless (no adults working)***	44.6%	52,691	14.9%****
Adults claiming JSA or ESA/IB or IS	64.0%	73,389	Pending
Families claiming JSA or ESA/IB or IS	74.8%	52,691	Not available
Families with a child under-5 with one adult out of work	80.1%	21,864	Not available
Families with a child under-5 with both adults out of work	51.7%	21,864	Not available

** National Prevalence data is only available for individuals, not families.*

*** Benefits included in this measure are JSA, ESA/IB, IS, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Carer's Allowance (CA).*

**** This is a proxy figure for workless. The figure represents any family where all adults 18-64 years-old were on JSA, ESA/IB or IS in the year before intervention.*

***** The National Prevalence figure is household level and taken from the Family Resources Survey data.*

Data provided by local authorities (Family Progress Data) showed that one in ten troubled families had a young person not in education, employment and training (NEET) and nearly a third of families were behind with payments for rent.

Table 5: Those at risk of financial exclusion, including those not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (from local authority data sources)

Among troubled families in this cohort, in the year before starting on the programme, % of:		Base	Indicative national prevalence*
Families with a young person who is not in education, employment or training (NEETs 16-24)	10.2%	21,026	Not available
Families who have any rent arrears	32.9%	11,991	Not available

** National Prevalence data is only available for individuals, not families.*

2. Education and school attendance

The data from the National Impact Study showed that children in troubled families were over two times as likely to be persistently absent for 10% or more sessions in the last school year than other school children nationally. Nearly a third of troubled families had a child who was persistently absent for 10% or more sessions in the last school year.

Table 6: Children not regularly attending school (from National Pupil Database)

Among troubled families, in the year before starting on the programme, % of:		Base	Indicative national prevalence*
Families with a child who is persistently overall absent (10% or more school sessions missed)	**30.6%**	**46,334**	**Not available**
Children who are persistently overall absent (10% or more school sessions missed)	**26.4%**	**79,021**	**11.0%**
Families with a child who is persistently overall absent (15% or more school sessions missed)	17.4%	46,334	Not available
Children who are persistently overall absent (15% or more school sessions missed)	14.9%	79,021	3.7%
Families who have a child who is persistently absent (15% or more school session missed) or has a fixed period exclusion or a permanent exclusion	36.9%	16,838	Not available
Children with a fixed period exclusion	12.2%	31,849	3.9%
Children with a permanent exclusion	0.9%	31,849	0.07%

Note: Absence data based on all families with at least one child aged 5-15 matched to National Pupil Database, all other figures based on children aged 5-17. Two thresholds for persistent absence are included as the absence threshold changed from 15% to 10% in September 2015.

** National Prevalence data is only available for individuals, not families.*

3. Children who need help

Children in troubled families were twelve times more likely to be classified as a Child In Need[4] and 21 times more likely to be on a Child Protection Plan than those in the general population. Children in these families were nearly three times as likely to have a Special Educational Need (SEN) than children nationally.

4 Children in need (CIN) are defined under the Children Act 1989 as: a child who is unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services, or the child is disabled. The Children in Need data includes looked after children, children on a Child Protection Plan and those with a Special Educational Need (SEN).

Table 7: Children who need help (from National Pupil Database)

Among troubled families in this cohort, in the year before starting on the programme, % of:		Base	Indicative national prevalence*
Families with a child who is a Child In Need (CIN)	**45.1%**	**16,287**	**Not available**
Children who are in care or looked after children (LAC)	**2.0%**	**30,838**	**0.6%**
Children classed as Child In Need	41.3%	30,838	3.4%
Children on a Child Protection Plan (CPP)	8.2%	30,838	0.4%
Families with at least one child with a Special Educational Need (with or without a statement)	51.4%	51,510	Not available
Children with a Special Educational Need (with or without a statement)	39.8%	87,084	14.4%
Children with a Special Educational Need (with a statement)	7.1%	87,084	2.8%

** National Prevalence data is only available for individuals, not families.*

4. Health

Data on health is currently only available from local data sources. We are in the process of agreeing access to data held by NHS Digital and Public Health England.

The data provided by local authorities (Family Progress Data) showed that over two fifths of troubled families had at least one individual with a mental health issue and one in six families had an individual dependent on non-prescription drugs or alcohol.

Table 8: Parents and children with a range of health problems (from local authority sources)

Among troubled families in this cohort, in the year before starting on the programme, % of:		Base	Indicative national prevalence*
Families with an individual with any mental health issue	**41.8%**	**15,822**	**Not available**
Families with an individual dependent on drugs or alcohol	15.0%	15,545	Not available

** National Prevalence data is only available for individuals, not families.*

5. Crime and anti-social behaviour

Using data from the National Impact Study we found adults in troubled families were nearly five times, and their children six times, more likely to have a caution or conviction than adults and children nationally.

Table 9: Adults and children involved in crime (from Police National Computer)

Among troubled families in this cohort, in the year before starting on the programme, % of:		Base	Indicative national prevalence*
Families with an adult or child with a caution or conviction**	**10.0%**	**58,865**	**Not available**
Adults with a caution or conviction	5.4%	76,832	1.2%
Children with a caution or conviction	5.1%	53,312	0.8%

** National Prevalence data is only available for individuals, not families.*

***Based on all families with at least one individual aged 10-100 matched to Police National Computer, other troubled families figures based on all adults aged 18-100 or all children aged 10-17 matched to Police National Computer.*

Local authority data (Family Progress Data) showed that more than two in five troubled families had a police call out to their home and a large minority were involved in anti-social behaviour.

Table 10: Adults and children involved in anti-social behaviour and police call outs (from local authority data sources)

Among troubled families in this cohort, in the year before starting on the programme, % of:		Base	Indicative national prevalence*
Families with an anti-social behaviour incident	15.8%	25,891	Not available
Families where police have been called out to their home	41.7%	27,583	Not available

** National Prevalence data is only available for individuals, not families.*

6. Domestic abuse

Local authorities record incidents of domestic abuse from local police data and/or their own data. A quarter of troubled families had at least one family member who had been affected by domestic abuse.

Table 11: Families affected by domestic abuse (from local authority data sources)

Among troubled families in this cohort, in the year before starting on the programme, % of:		Base	Indicative national prevalence*
Families who have been involved in a domestic abuse incident	**25.3%**	**34,099**	Not available**

** National Prevalence data is only available for individuals, not families.*

*** The national figure for individual adults aged 18-59 is 6.1%.*

Complexity

All families had to meet at least two of the eligibility criteria to be engaged on the programme.

The table below shows for each individual domain the percentage of families also affected by one other issue, but does not show whether families were affected by more than two issues or the number of issues they faced. The data is taken from both the National Impact Study and the Family Progress Data, however due to missing data the base numbers are low.

- The data showed that being a troubled family was associated with financial exclusion – around three quarters of families with at least one problem from each of the five other domains also suffered from financial exclusion.
- Education and attendance was strongly related to children needing help with four in five families affected by these two issues.
- Nearly two thirds of families affected by domestic abuse were affected by crime and anti-social behaviour with a similar proportion affected by children needing help.

Table 12: Interrelationships between the problems affecting troubled families

6 Headline Domains		They also had:					
		Crime & ASB	Health	Education & Attendance	Financial Exclusion	Children Needing Help	Domestic Abuse
Of those families that met the criteria on:	Crime & ASB		51.9%	39.5%	77.1%	65.4%	36.5%
	Health	44.2%		38.6%	76.0%	67.7%	29.8%
	Education & Attendance	35.7%	46.9%		73.7%	82.8%	23.1%
	Financial Exclusion	33.3%	42.7%	35.3%		63.2%	24.5%
	Children Needing Help	32.7%	44.1%	45.9%	73.3%		24.7%
	Domestic abuse	62.1%	48.2%	33.8%	76.9%	64.9%	

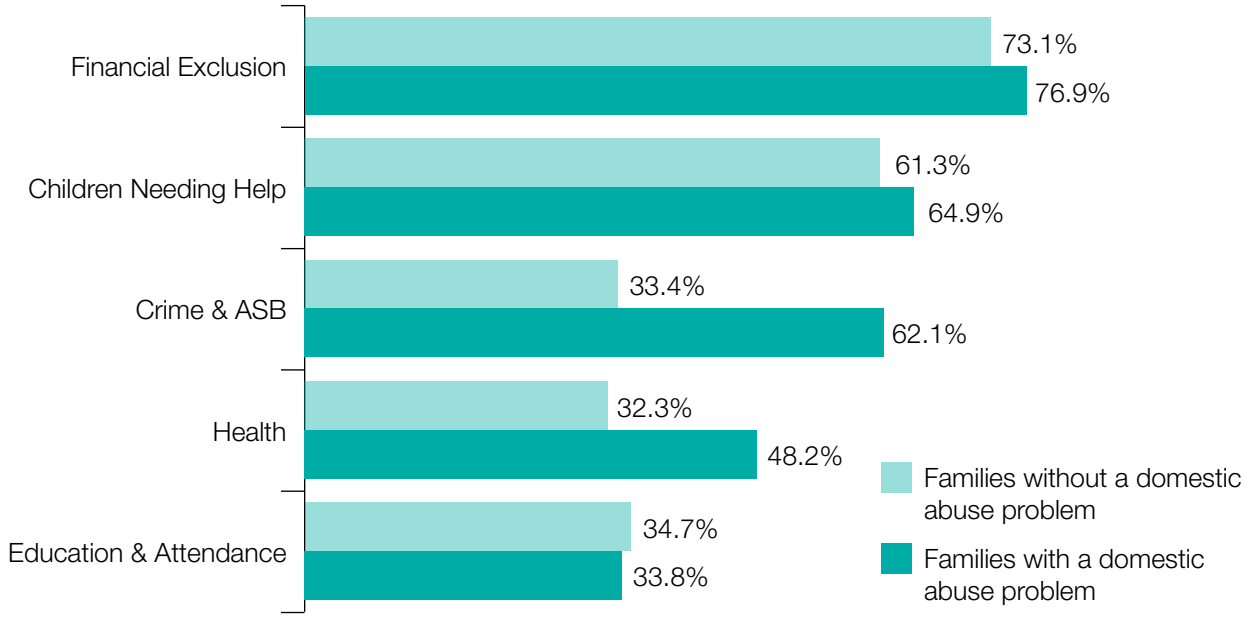
Note: Health and domestic abuse data is taken from local authority data sources. Due to the quality of the data provided by local authorities the results presented here could underestimate the number of problems in each domain.

Domestic abuse

Further analysis was carried out comparing those families that were and were not affected by domestic abuse. The data is taken from both the National Impact Study and the Family Progress Data, however due to missing data the base numbers are low.

The analysis showed that troubled families with a domestic abuse problem were more likely to experience other problems in four of the five other headline domains than families without a domestic abuse problem, shown in the chart below.

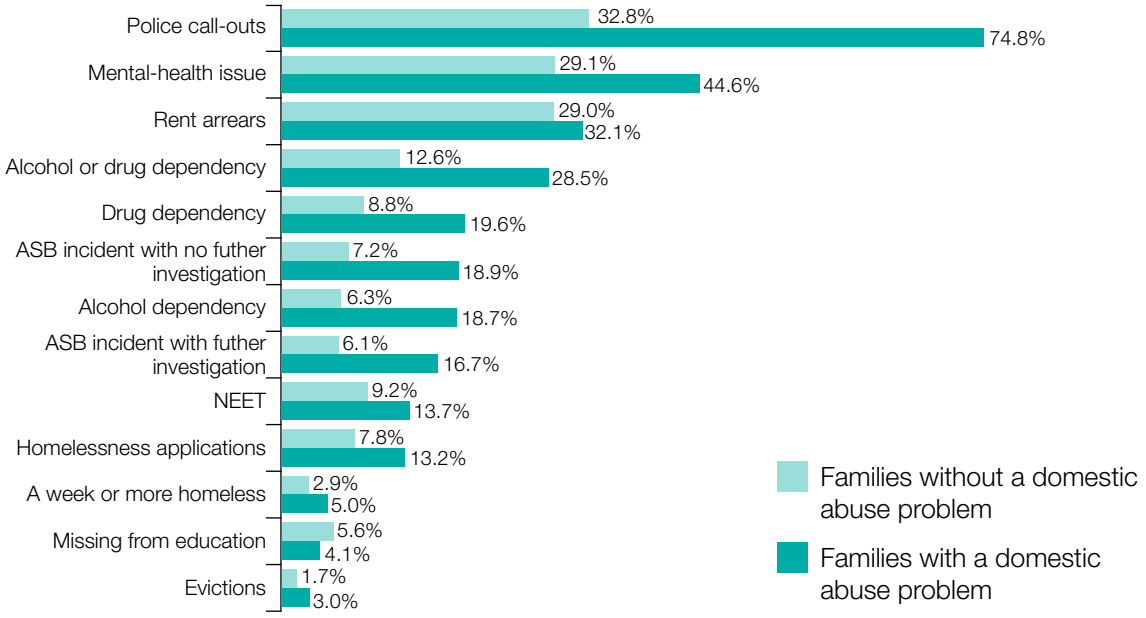
Chart 2: Comparison of issues under the 6 headline domains between families affected and not affected by domestic abuse



Base: 2,499 families with a domestic abuse problem, 8,087 families without a domestic abuse problem.

A larger proportion of families affected by domestic abuse also suffered from mental health problems than those not affected by domestic abuse. Perhaps not surprisingly, three in four troubled families affected by domestic abuse also experienced at least one police call out in the 12 months prior to intervention compared to one in three not affected by domestic abuse.

Chart 3: Comparison of issues between families affected and not affected by domestic abuse



Base: 2,499 families with a domestic abuse problem, 8,087 families without a domestic abuse problem.

Summary

This report includes early findings from the data gathered for the evaluation of the programme and shows that families targeted by the programme have a range of complex needs which are more prevalent in these families than the general population (a summary of the main findings is included in the key findings above).

The next steps for analysis are to look further into the complexity of issues among the families, intergenerational issues and the relationships between different issues within families. Further work will also be undertaken to understand more about the progress of families on the programme and to measure the impact of the programme on outcomes.

Technical annex: data sources

This annex provides information on the quality and sources of the different datasets referenced in the report.

NATIONAL PREVALENCE ESTIMATES

In order to provide national comparisons for the headline characteristics and prevalence of problems amongst troubled families, DCLG analysts have estimated indicative national prevalence estimates for the relevant reference population from national statistics produced by other Government departments (e.g. Department for Education, Department for Work and Pensions and Ministry of Justice). These are provisional estimates and are subject to further discussion with departments.

Dataset	Description	Source	Frequency
National Impact Study (NIS)	Individual level linked administrative data for all families assessed as eligible for the programme on employment/benefits, crime/offences, education/ attendance, children in need/care. Discussions ongoing to access health data for future rounds of data matching.	Nationally held administrative datasets	6 monthly data linkage
Family Progress Data (FPD)	Individual and family level data on intervention type and additional information not collected in administrative datasets (e.g. domestic abuse incidence, NEET status, housing tenure, etc.). Requested by DCLG and collected through an online information system. These data are subject to further quality assurance and there are some issues with missing data. We are working with local authorities on improving the quality of the data collection.	Local authorities (submitted to DCLG via an online information system)	6 monthly

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