



BRIEFING PAPER

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The Troubled Families programme (England)

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Summary

Troubled Families is a programme of targeted-intervention for families with multiple problems, including crime, anti-social behaviour, mental health problems, domestic abuse and unemployment.

Local authorities identify 'troubled families' in their area and usually assign a key worker to act as a single point of contact. Central Government pays local authorities by results for each family they 'turn around'.

£448m was allocated to the first phase of the programme, which ran from 2012-2015. Local authorities worked with around 120,000 families, and 'turned around' 99%.

As a result of this success, the second phase of the Troubled Families programme was launched in 2015, with £920m allocated to help an additional 400,000 families. The second phase will run until 2020.

The programme was championed in part as a way to reduce public spending on families who require support from multiple parts of the state. No formal analysis has yet been published on the extent of any savings from the programme as a whole.

The Troubled Families programme is administered by the Department for Communities and Local Government, and covers England only.

1. Troubled Families programme

Summary

- The first phase of the Troubled Families programme ran from 2012-2015
- It set a target to work with, and 'turn around', families with multiple problems
- Problems included crime, anti-social behaviour, truancy and unemployment
- Local authorities ran the programme and received payment-by-results from central Government
- Programme was expanded for 2015-2020 to work with 400,000 additional families
- Second phase targeted additional problems, including domestic violence, health, drug abuse, mental health and children at risk

1.1 Pilot programme

The 2010 Spending Review announced a new Community Budgets programme to be trialled in 16 English local authority areas that would:

Help turn around the lives of families with multiple problems, improving outcomes and reducing costs to welfare and public services. The campaign will be underpinned by local Community Budgets focused on family intervention –enabling a more flexible and integrated approach to delivering the help these families need.¹

More details were announced in a subsequent press release. The programme, overseen by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), would give council areas direct control over several strands of central Government funding from 2011/12, free of the usual conditionality attached to the funding streams. This would then be spent on tackling social problems around families with complex needs.²

The 16 council areas chosen to pilot the programme were: Birmingham, Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bradford, Essex, Greater Manchester (a group of 10 councils), Hull, Kent, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Barnet, Croydon, Islington, Lewisham, Swindon, and a grouped area of Westminster, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Wandsworth.³

1.2 Phase One (2012-2015)

In a 2011 speech, David Cameron set out plans to invest £448m over the course of the Parliament to turn around the lives of around 120,000

Launched in 2012, the programme initially targeted 120,000 families with multiple problems

¹ HM Treasury, [Spending Review 2010](#), October 2010

² More information on the community budget model can be found in the Commons Library briefing paper, [Local government: alternative models of service delivery](#)

³ [DCLG press release, '16 areas get 'community budgets' to help the vulnerable'](#), 22 October 2010

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troubled families in England.⁴ The speech cited an estimate that, over the previous year, £9 billion had been spent on these approximately 120,000 families, due to the multiple interventions they received from different parts of the state.⁵

Although the new programme would continue to target families with multiple problems, the administration and funding of the new Troubled Families programme was different to that of the Community Budgets pilot, moving instead to a payment-by-results model.

Given the cross-cutting nature of the programme, to target families with multiple problems, DCLG provided 39% of the central Government funding, with five other departments providing the rest (Department for Work & Pensions, Ministry of Justice, Department for Education, Home Office and Department of Health).⁶

Identifying troubled families

The figure of approximately 120,000 troubled families was an estimated number based on a 2005 survey. DCLG then provided all upper-tier local authorities in England with an indicative number of troubled families in their area, based on population estimates and indices of deprivation and child well-being.

Local authorities were then responsible for identifying their assigned troubled families, based on criteria set out in the financial framework document (see below).

In order to help local authorities identify some of their troubled families, regulations were passed allowing the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to share data on families receiving out of work benefits, without informed consent.⁷

Definitions

The definition of 'troubled families', as set out in the financial framework document. This defined 'troubled families' as households who:

- Are involved in crime and anti-social behaviour
 - Households with 1 or more under 18-year-old with a proven offence in the last 12 months; AND/ OR
 - Households where 1 or more member has an anti-social behaviour order, anti-social behaviour injunction, anti-social behaviour contract, or where the family has been subject to a housing-related anti-social behaviour intervention in the last 12 months.
- Have children not in school

Troubled families were defined as those facing problems with crime, anti-social behaviour, truancy and/or unemployment

⁴ The 120,000 figure is based on research from 2005. Further details were published in the Cabinet Office's, [Troubled Families Estimates Explanatory Note](#)

⁵ Prime Minister's Office, [Troubled families speech](#), 15 December 2011

⁶ National Audit Office, [Programmes to help families facing multiple challenges](#), 3 December 2013, HC 878 2013-14

⁷ The [Social Security \(Information-sharing in relation to Welfare Services etc.\) Regulations 2012](#), SI 2012/1483

- Has been subject to permanent exclusion; three or more fixed school exclusions across the last 3 consecutive terms; OR
- Is in a Pupil Referral Unit or alternative provision because they have previously been excluded, or is not on a school roll; AND/ OR
- A child has had 15% unauthorised absences or more from school across the last 3 consecutive terms.
- Have an adult on out of work benefits
- Cause high costs to the public purse
 - Local discretion... to add other families⁸

Local discretion could include factors such as drug and alcohol misuse, under 18 conceptions, health problems, domestic abuse, adults involved in gang-related crimes, and a child on a Child Protection Plan.

The aim of the programme was to 'turn around' the lives of these families. This would be achieved either when:

- They achieve all 3 of the education and crime/ anti-social behaviour measures set out below where relevant:
 - Each child in the family has had fewer than 3 fixed exclusions and less than 15% of unauthorised absences in the last 3 school terms; and
 - A 60% reduction in anti-social behaviour across the family in the last 6 months; and
 - Offending rate by all minors in the family reduced by at least 33% in the last 6 months.; OR
- At least one adult in the family has moved off out-of-work benefits into continuous employment in the last 6 months

These outcomes would lead to payment under the payment-by-results system (see below). There was also some payment if families achieved 'progress to work' (volunteering for the Work Programme or attached to European Social Fund provision), but this was not a measure of 'turning around' a family.

Payment-by-results

DCLG estimated that the cost of intensive intervention with a family was around £10,000. As part of the Troubled Families programme, it would pay 40% of this (£4,000), in a payment-by-results model, when a family was 'turned around' (see above).

The framework document referenced DCLG analysis that existing programmes would have 'turned around' one in six families eligible for support, even without the Troubled Families programme, and therefore this 40% would only be paid for five out of every six families helped.

Part of the £4,000 would be paid up-front as an 'attachment fee', with the rest paid when a family was defined as having been 'turned around'. The proportion paid up-front would decrease year on year, to

Local authorities received up to £4,000 for each family 'turned around' under the programme

⁸ DCLG, [Financial framework for the Troubled Families programme's payment-by-results scheme for local authorities](#), 28 March 2012

reflect the higher, initial set-up costs. The up-front fee made up 80% of payment in 2012/13, 60% in 2013/14 and 40% in 2014/15. **Figure 1** shows the payment model for 2012/13.

Figure 1: Troubled Families payment-by-results model, 2012/13

Result	Attachment fee	Results payment	Total
They achieve all 3 of the education and crime/ anti-social behaviour measures set out below where relevant: 1. Each child in the family has had fewer than 3 fixed exclusions and less than 15% of unauthorised absences in the last 3 school terms; and 2. A 60% reduction in anti-social behaviour across the family in the last 6 months; and 3. Offending rate by all minors in the family reduced by at least a 33% in the last 6 months.	£3,200 per family	£700 per family	£4,000 per family
If they do not enter work, but achieve the 'progress to work' (one adult in the family has either volunteered for the Work Programme or attached to the European Social Fund provision in the last 6 months).		£100 per family	
OR			
At least one adult in the family has moved off out-of-work benefits into continuous employment in the last 6 months (and is not on the European Social Fund Provision or Work Programme to avoid double-payment).	£3,200 per family	£800 per family	£4,000 per family

Results for payment would be self-declared by local authorities' Troubled Families teams. However, DCLG would also carry out 'spot checks' to ensure accurate reporting.

How the programme worked in practice

The financial framework did not set out any centrally mandated way in which the Troubled Families programme should be implemented, instead emphasising flexibility for local authorities.

In December 2012, DCLG published [Working with Troubled Families: a guide to the evidence and good practice](#). Looking at what practitioners and families said had worked for them, the guide noted five key factors:

1. A dedicated worker, dedicated to a family
2. Practical 'hands on' support
3. A persistent, assertive and challenging approach
4. Considering the family as a whole – gathering the intelligence
5. Common purpose and agreed action⁹

A key worker was usually assigned to each family as a coordinator with various state services

⁹ DCLG, [Working with Troubled Families: a guide to the evidence and good practice](#), December 2012

Examples throughout the guide showed that many practitioners based interventions around having a key worker as a single point of contact for the family.

The DWP also provided 150 JobCentre Plus advisers to 94 local authority Troubled Families teams, to offer help in finding work.¹⁰

1.3 Phase Two (2015-2020)

The 2013 Spending Round announced that the Troubled Families programme would be expanded to reach an additional 400,000 families, for which £200m would be allocated in the first year (2015/16).¹¹ It was later confirmed that the programme would run until 2020, with an additional £720m allocated for the remaining four years.¹²

2015-2020 will see the programme expanded to target an additional 400,000 families

Stephen Crossley of the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (CCJS) criticised the expanded 400,000 figure as a move away from the programme's initially stated aims:

The new figure of 400,000 more 'troubled families' equates to around 6.5 per cent of all families in England, and the substantial discretion offered to local authorities in interpreting and applying the criteria, means that almost any family who comes into contact with, or is referred to, a non-universal service could fall into the category of 'troubled'.¹³

Although the programme did not fully start until 2015/16, 113 local authorities signed up as 'early starters' in 2014/15 for the expanded programme.

Under measures brought in under the *Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016*, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government is required to report annually to Parliament on the progress of the Troubled Families programme.

Changes from phase one

The significant increase in the number of troubled families identified is due to wider inclusion criteria than in phase one. A new financial framework for phase two, [Financial framework for the expanded Troubled Families programme](#), set out the following criteria:

To be eligible for the expanded programme, each family must have at least two of the following six problems:

1. Parents or children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour.
2. Children who have not been attending school regularly.
3. Children who need help: children of all ages, who need help, are identified as in need or are subject to a Child Protection Plan.
4. Adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion or young people at risk of worklessness.
5. Families affected by domestic violence and abuse.

¹⁰ [HC Deb 10 March 2015 c158](#)

¹¹ HM Treasury, [Spending Round 2013](#), Cm 8639, 26 June 2013

¹² [PQ 28956 \[on Families: Disadvantaged\]](#), 3 March 2016

¹³ CCJS, [The Troubled Families Programme: the perfect social policy?](#), November 2015

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6. Parents or children with a range of health problems.¹⁴

Each of these criteria were more broadly defined than in the first phase of the programme. In addition, there is a less rigid definition of a family being 'turned around'. In the second phase, families are 'turned around' when they have:

1. Achieved significant and sustained progress, compared with all their problems at the point of engagement , OR
2. An adult in the family has moved off benefits and into continuous employment.

What counts as significant and sustained progress is agreed locally and set out in a Troubled Family Outcome Plan. These plans should follow the 10 principles set out in Annex D of the 2015 framework.

In addition, should a local authority, in its work with a family, identify more problems than were initially suspected, progress must be made against all of these problems to qualify for payment-by-results.

The payment-by-results model has only been set out so far for 2015/16. The local authority will identify a number of families with which it will engage in 2015/16, for which it receives a £1,000 attachment fee, followed by £800 for each family 'turned around'.

As with phase one of the programme, results are self-reported by local authorities' Troubled Families teams.

Families are 'turned around' by making 'significant and sustained progress' on their identified problems

¹⁴ DCLG, [Financial framework for the expanded Troubled Families programme](#), March 2015

2. Results and outcomes

Summary

- DCLG figures show that 99% of the families identified were 'turned around'
- Government estimated the programme saved £1.2bn of public money
- Some commentators have raised concerns about the accuracy of this figure, and about the impact the programme had on the families it 'turned around'
- Independent evaluation of the programme was scheduled for 2015, but is still to be published

2.1 How 'troubled' were the identified families?

The first phase of the Troubled Families programme set out to identify 117,910 families to 'turn around' by the end of the Parliament, a figure usually rounded to 120,000 in DCLG publications. Figures for May 2015 indicated that all 117,910 troubled families had been identified.

Some commentators, such as Ruth Levitas from the Poverty and Social Exclusion research project (PSE), criticised the use of the term 'troubled families', noting that the families identified for help by the programme were not necessarily the "neighbours from hell" referred to in David Cameron's 2011 speech:

The '120,000 families' identified in the original SETF (Social Exclusion Task Force) report do indeed have troubles: physical and mental ill-health, poor housing, income poverty, material deprivation. And, as Ogden Nash said, 'a trouble is a trouble is a trouble, and it's twice the trouble when a person is poor'. The leap to treating them as 'troublesome families', bears little relation to the original criteria of multiple disadvantage on which the figure is based.¹⁵

Critics argued that the so-called 'troubled families' had little in common besides economic disadvantage

The CCJS's analysis of the families helped under the programme also raised concerns about the term troubled families:

In contrast to the image of 'troubled families' as 'neighbours from hell' where drug and alcohol addictions, crime and irresponsibility 'cascade through generations'... the only characteristics shared by the majority of 'troubled families' are that they are white, not in work, live in social housing and have at least one household member experiencing poor health, illness and/or a disability. Crime, anti-social behaviour and substance abuse, even at relatively low levels, are all characteristics which relate to small minorities of official 'troubled families'.¹⁶

¹⁵ PSE, *There may be 'trouble' ahead: what we know about those 120,000 'troubled' families*, 21 April 2012, Policy response series no. 3

¹⁶ CCJS, *The Troubled Families Programme: the perfect social policy?*, November 2015

2.2 How many families were ‘turned around’?

The Government’s target, at the launch of phase one of the Troubled Families programme in 2012, was that 117,910 families would be ‘turned around’ by the end of the 2010-2015 Parliament.

Statistics as of May 2015 showed that of the 117,910 families identified, 116,654, or 99%, had been ‘turned around’. Of the 152 local authorities in England, only two, Cornwall and Lancashire, had a success rate of below 90%, whilst 132 had a success rate of 100%.

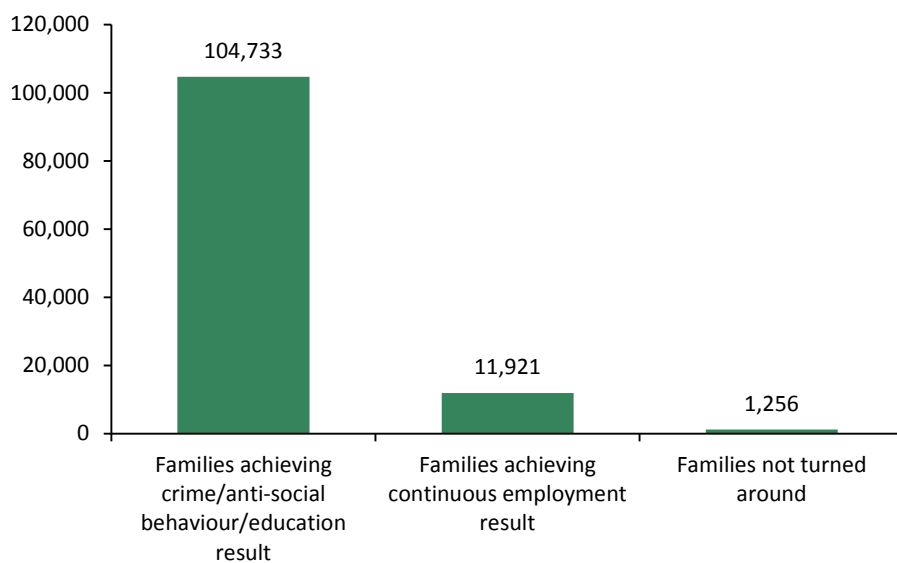
132 out of 152 local authorities had a success rate of 100% for families they had ‘turned around’

Table 1: Families identified and turned around by region

Region	Total number of families	Total turned around, as of May 2015	% turned around
North East	7,285	7,282	100.0%
North West	19,385	18,972	97.9%
East Midlands	9,345	9,300	99.5%
West Midlands	13,960	13,685	98.0%
East of England	9,530	9,505	99.7%
London	21,488	21,452	99.8%
South East	13,745	13,697	99.7%
South West	9,162	8,960	97.8%
Yorkshire & the Humber	14,010	13,801	98.5%
Total	117,910	116,654	98.9%

The significant majority of families that were ‘turned around’ by the programme were defined as such because of a crime, anti-social behaviour or education outcome, rather than an ‘achieving continuous employment’ outcome (see Chart 1 below).

Chart 1: Outcomes for identified ‘troubled families’, to May 2015



Source: DCLG, [Troubled Families: progress information by December 2014 and families turned around by May 2015](#)

The then Communities Secretary Eric Pickles welcomed these results in a statement to the House of Commons in March 2015:

I am genuinely honoured to have led this remarkable, life-changing programme for the Government, and why I am delighted that it is being expanded to help more troubled families across the country¹⁷

In response, the then Shadow Communities Secretary Hilary Benn also offered some support for the programme:

We know that intensive support really can help families transform their lives. Raising children can be challenging and we can all do with help and advice at times. We support the programme precisely because the local authorities that are implementing it on the ground are convinced that it makes a difference.¹⁸

However, a number of commentators have criticised these results. Jonathan Portes from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) argued that the success rates were so high that they arguably lacked credibility:

CLG told Manchester that it had precisely 2,385 troubled families, and that it was expected to find them and “turn them around”; in return, it would be paid £4,000 per family for doing so. Amazingly, Manchester did precisely that. Ditto Leeds. And Liverpool. And so on. And CLG is publishing these figures as fact. I doubt the North Korean Statistical Office would have the cheek.¹⁹

Others, including Lyn Brown MP, argued that in many cases families had been classed as having been ‘turned around’ and had in fact never engaged with the programme in their area, with many still facing problems of crime, unemployment and truancy.²⁰

Stephen Crossley from the CCJS also raised concerns with the use of the term ‘turned around’, particularly that it may not reflect the experience of those actually targeted by the Troubled Families programme:

We do not know how many ‘turned around’ families are still experiencing domestic violence, poor mental health or other issues such as poor quality or overcrowded housing, poverty or material deprivation, because this information has not been reported by the government.

At present, we are also not aware of whether the families consider their lives to have been ‘turned around’ by their involvement with the programme, or whether their lives remained ‘turned around’ after the intensive support was withdrawn. It should also be noted that many families will not know that they have been labelled as ‘troubled families’ because many local authorities choose not to inform them of this and use different names for their local programmes.²¹

Critics argued that some of the families who had been ‘turned around’ had received little actual assistance from the programme

¹⁷ [HC Deb 10 March 2015, c159](#)

¹⁸ [HC Deb 10 March 2015, c160](#)

¹⁹ NIESR policy blog, [A troubling attitude to statistics](#), 15 March 2015

²⁰ [HC Deb 30 June 2014, c582](#)

²¹ CCJS, [The Troubled Families Programme: the perfect social policy?](#), November 2015

2.3 How much money did the programme save?

David Cameron's 2011 speech highlighted the benefits, not only to those families who would take part in the programme, but also to the public purse:

We've always known that these families cost an extraordinary amount of money...

...but now we've come up the actual figures.

Last year the state spent an estimated £9 billion on just 120,000 families...

...that is around £75,000 per family.²²

Of this £9bn, Government figures estimated that £8bn was spent "purely reacting to their (the approximately 120,000 families) problems".²³

Analysis of subsequent DCLG publications by Stephen Crossley of the CCJS raised concerns about the accuracy of this figure. Crossley argued that the £9bn had been extrapolated from a smaller sample of families with at least five disadvantages *and* a child with multiple behaviour problems, and that this may not be the case amongst the whole population of the approximately 120,000 families.²⁴ However, a 2014 written statement from the then Communities Secretary Eric Pickles noted that each of the families worked with by that point had an average of nine serious problems.²⁵

DCLG estimated phase one of the programme saved £1.2bn of public spending on the 120,000 families

Although no target was set for how much money the programme intended to save, DCLG's original business case, a saving of £2.9bn (later revised down to £2.7bn) was estimated.²⁶ Figures were published in March 2015, estimating that £1.2bn had been saved to date.²⁷

This was based on extrapolation of results from seven local authorities, including Manchester, for which it was estimated that for every £1 invested in the programme, £2.20 in benefits were realised.²⁸

When questioned on the difference between the announced £1.2bn and the initial cost estimate of £9bn, the then Communities Secretary Eric Pickles gave the following response:

The right hon. Gentleman made a number of points on how we can demonstrate success and square the £1.2 billion with the £9 billion. He knows as well as anybody that this is notoriously difficult territory, because Governments of all types are absolutely terrible at measuring outcomes. We have made a start—he might have had an opportunity to look at the research—by looking at

²² Prime Minister's Office, [Troubled families speech](#), 15 December 2011

²³ [PQ 7919 \[on Families: Disadvantaged\]](#), 7 September 2015

²⁴ CCJS, [The Troubled Families Programme: the perfect social policy?](#), November 2015

²⁵ [HC Deb 1 September 2014, c5WS](#)

²⁶ National Audit Office, [Outcome-based payment schemes: government's use of payment by results](#), 19 June 2015, HC 86 2015-16

²⁷ [DCLG press release, 'More than 105,000 troubled families turned around saving taxpayers an estimated £1.2bn'](#), 10 March 2015

²⁸ DCLG, [The Benefits of the Troubled Families Programme to the Taxpayer](#), March 2015

seven exemplar authorities and extrapolating the findings to produce some financial analysis. To answer his questions, I think that it is only fair to have that audited independently. As he will know, we are due to have a very comprehensive audit of the programme.²⁹

In their analysis of the £1.2bn, Full Fact raised concerns about the quality of the figure:

The £1.2 billion figure doesn't count the cost of the intervention, and it's based on a sample of families from just seven of the 152 local authorities taking part in the scheme.

Most of the seven areas saved about £6,000 to £10,000 per family, but Salford saved £18,000 per family while Staffordshire saved £49,000 per family in the first year of the programme.

If the other 145 local authorities are more like the £6,000 or £10,000 regions than Salford or Staffordshire, then the total savings will be much lower than the £1.2 billion figure.

The department says that it thinks the estimate for savings is on the low side. Not all of the savings made are included (for example, they don't have an agreed cost for police call outs), and the councils reporting back didn't collect information on all the services where they could make savings.

Some areas actually ended up spending more per family on things like social services and housing, so some of the services that they didn't have information on might have seen an increase in spending.³⁰

The National Audit Office (NAO) also noted that the estimated figure did not take into account the cost of the intervention or the non-intervention rate (that is, those who would have been 'turned around' anyway without the programme).

The NAO report did however praise the programme for providing evidence in achieving one of its aims, encouraging more joined-up service provision across local authorities.³¹

The 2014 Public Accounts Committee report on [Programmes to help families facing multiple challenges](#) also noted the positive impact the programme had had in this regard:

Local authorities are taking action to bring services together, for example, by combining databases maintained by different agencies to help identify families. In addition, the programme has helped to galvanise a range of local services around families and to provide a single person to support families' needs, and navigate their way around all the relevant services rather than the families having to deal with each agency individually. We also commend Louise Casey CB, Director General of the DCLG's Troubled Families programme, for her leadership of, and commitment to, the programme.³²

The NAO raised concerns about how the figure of £1.2bn of savings figure was calculated

²⁹ [HC Deb 10 March 2015, c161](#)

³⁰ Full Fact, [£1.2 billion saved? The troubled families programme](#), 23 June 2015

³¹ National Audit Office, [Outcome-based payment schemes: government's use of payment by results](#), 19 June 2015, HC 86 2015-16

³² Public Accounts Committee, [Programmes to help families facing multiple challenges](#), 24 March 2014, HC 688 2013-14

2.4 Independent evaluation of the programme

The comprehensive, independent audit of the first phase of the Troubled Families programme is yet to be published, despite an announced publication date of late 2015.³³

The commissioned audit is led by Ecorys, a research consultancy who have established a consortium of five research organisations:

- Ipsos MORI
- National Institute for Economic and Social Research
- Clarissa White Research
- Bryson Purdon Social Research
- Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education

In July 2014, an [interim report](#) was published with monitoring data on the families who had participated in the programme, although it did not provide any estimates of savings.

The report also noted that many local authorities had not been able to submit the required data for analysis as of the time of publication, despite first requesting this information in December 2013.³⁴

The independent audit will assess the effectiveness and the financial benefits of the programme

³³ [PQ 4559 \[on Families: Disadvantaged\]](#), 6 July 2015

³⁴ DCLG, [National Evaluation of the Troubled Families Programme: Interim report family monitoring data](#), July 2014

3. Similar programmes

3.1 Respect programme (2006-2010)

As part of the previous Labour Government's approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, 2006 saw the launch of the Respect programme. Following six local authority pilot schemes, the programme included family intervention projects (FIPs), which would:

Take a new approach to tackle the behaviour of 'problem families' by challenging them to accept support to change their behaviour, backed up by enforcement measures.³⁵

The Respect family intervention projects also focused on families with multiple problems

The policy was part of a change in policy emphasis on anti-social behaviour, moving from investment in deprived areas to a more targeted focus on so-called 'problem families'.³⁶

Similar to the Troubled Families programme, Respect allocated a key worker to co-ordinate with the family and multiple services, and to offer a single point of contact. However, unlike Troubled Families, there was a focus on sanctions for those who did not sufficiently engage with the programme.

There were a number of similarities with the Troubled Families programme, including personnel. The Respect Task Force was led by Louise Casey, who is currently in charge of the Troubled Families Unit in DCLG.

Additionally, like the Troubled Families programme, the Government's analysis argued that the programme was extremely successful, with significant reductions in anti-social behaviour, truancy and housing enforcement actions.³⁷ Critics similarly argued that poor families were misrepresented as 'problem families' and that the statistical basis for the high success rate was questionable.³⁸

In his response to Eric Pickles' March 2015 statement on the Troubled Families Programme, the then Shadow Communities Secretary Hilary Benn argued that the programme could be directly traced back to the Respect programme:

We on the Opposition Benches support this important work. As the Secretary of State has generously acknowledged, the previous Labour Government started the family intervention project, and a future Labour Government would want to see this work continue and go from strength to strength.³⁹

³⁵ Home Office, [Respect Action Plan](#), 10 January 2006

³⁶ *The Telegraph*, ['I got it wrong on problem families, admits Blair'](#), 28 April 2007

³⁷ Department for Children, Schools and Families, [Anti-social behaviour family intervention projects: monitoring and evaluation](#), November 2009

³⁸ CCJS, [Family intervention projects: a classic case of policy-based evidence](#), June 2010

³⁹ [HC Deb 10 March 2015, c159](#)

3.2 Families with Multiple Problems programme (2011-2015)

The Families with Multiple Problems programme was launched in December 2011, funded under the 2007-2013 European Social Fund, with the DWP acting as one of the co-financing organisations. £200m was provided for the programme from the DWP's budget.

It sought to work with families that faced multiple barriers to work, and the coordinator role could either be carried out by local authorities or by private providers. The DWP set a target that 22% of those joining the programme would have moved into employment by March 2015.

The final outcomes data was published in October 2015, which showed that 9,130 out of 79,130 participants moved into sustainable employment, with 3,550 employment outcomes achieved from March 2015 onwards. The DWP calculated the overall job outcome rate for all participants, 18 months after joining the programme, as 11.8%.⁴⁰

The NAO highlighted concerns about the performance of private contractors in the programme, noting that none met their target for number of families to work with (attachments), with the best performing reaching 74% of the target, and the worst performing reaching only 7%.⁴¹

The Public and Commercial Services trade union argued that the contracted private companies were "proving themselves incapable of providing the kind of complex, dedicated support necessary".⁴² However, although some local authorities performed better, with one reaching 270% of its attachment target, 105 authorities did not meet the target set for them by the DWP by December 2013.

Relationship to the Troubled Families programme

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) looked at the DWP programme and the DCLG programme together in its 2014 report, [Programmes to help families facing multiple challenges](#).

The PAC report was critical that the two programmes had both been launched in the same year, targeting similar families and both offering payment-by-results, with little coordination or joint governance arrangements between DWP and DCLG:

The integration of the programmes at the design phase was poor, leading to confusion, and contributing to the low number of referrals to the DWP's programme.⁴³

The Departments told PAC that this was because it was decided that both programmes were to be rolled out as quickly as possible, then ensuring they were joined up later. Some coordination took place after

The DWP programme launched in the same year as Troubled Families, with many of the same objectives

⁴⁰ DWP, [ESF Support for Families with Multiple Problems – December 2011 to August 2015](#), October 2015

⁴¹ National Audit Office, [Programmes to help families facing multiple challenges](#), 3 December 2013, HC 878 2013-14

⁴² *Mirror*, ["Catastrophic" back-to-work scheme for families gets just 720 people back to work - out of 88,000](#), 3 December 2013

⁴³ Public Accounts Committee, [Programmes to help families facing multiple challenges](#), 24 March 2014, HC 688 2013-14

both programmes had been launched, such as the secondment of 150 Jobcentre Plus advisers to local authorities' Troubled Families teams.

The similarity in some of the outcomes can be seen in the payment-by-results criteria for phase one of the Troubled Families programme (see section 1.2). Local authorities cannot receive payment for getting families into work if they are attached to the DWP/ ESF programme, to avoid double payment.

4. Devolution of the Troubled Families programme

As part of the Government's devolution agenda, combined authorities in some areas have chosen to negotiate control over local Troubled Families programmes. So far, only Greater Manchester's devolution deal has done so:

Greater Manchester is so far the only combined authority to secure devolution of the Troubled Families programme

The government now commits to support Greater Manchester to establish a Life Chances Investment Fund from April 2017, on the basis of a jointly agreed business plan. The government will enable Greater Manchester to bring together funding from the following budget lines into a single pot:

- a. Troubled Families Programme, including the service transformation grant and payment by results allocation for Greater Manchester;
- b. Working Well pilot; and
- c. Cabinet Office Life Chances Fund

[...]

This commitment is subject to agreement of an appropriate outcomes framework and governance arrangements, and fulfilment of DCLG performance and evaluation requirements in respect of the Troubled Families programme.⁴⁴

Whilst DCLG will retain oversight of the programme, the ten Greater Manchester borough will be able to pool their Troubled Families funding. The combined authority has a history of pooling its Troubled Families budgets, being only one of two combined council areas among the 16 total council areas participating in the 2011 Community Budgets pilot (see section 1.1).

Greater Manchester's programme will also incorporate elements of the community budget model, pooling funds from two other related funding streams:

Government and Greater Manchester will jointly establish a Life Chances Investment Fund from April 2017, aligning funding from the Troubled Families Programme, the Working Well pilot and the Cabinet Office Life Chances Fund with local resources to increase investment in innovative approaches to delivering public resources.⁴⁵

More information can be found in the Commons Library briefing paper, [Devolution to Local Government in England](#).⁴⁶

⁴⁴ HM Treasury, [Further Devolution to Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#), 16 March 2016

⁴⁵ Greater Manchester Combined Authority, [Budget Announcement: further devolution to Greater Manchester](#), 18 March 2016

⁴⁶ House of Commons Library, [Devolution to Local Government in England](#), SN07029, 5 April 2016

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