

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 24 January 2012

Community Budgets Update

1.0 Background

This report provides background information on the Government's Community Budgets initiative and also describes progress to date with the implementation of Community Budgets on Wirral. The Children's Trust is asked to note the report.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Community Budgets were introduced by the government as an initiative to deal with the challenges presented by families with complex needs. Building on the Total Place model, Community Budgets involves a number of agencies working together to identify needs and appropriate interventions. Central to this approach is the need for families to have one worker who will work with the agencies involved with the family and ensure that the interventions are appropriate and the family is involved in the planning process.
- 2.2 The first phase of Community Budgets was introduced in a number of authorities in the spring of 2011. In August 2011, local authorities were invited to register their interest in being involved in phase two. Wirral registered an interest at that time.
- 2.3 In response to the questions raised following the riots in the summer of 2011, the Government indicated that there were too many families with complex needs not engaged with the system with children at risk of, or actually involved in, anti social behaviour. The Government has set a target to move 120,000 families out from high levels of need to a point where parents are work ready, the children are in education employment or training and there is a reduction in anti social behaviour. To drive this policy the Troubled Families Unit was set up in the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Louise Casey was appointed to head up the Unit.

3.0 Current Position

- 3.1 Wirral's involvement in phase two of Community Budgets requires a Community Budgets Business Plan to be published on the Wirral Council website by April 2012. The intention is to target the work at 50 families who meet the criteria in one locality and to develop the necessary changes in approach by agencies to deliver the improvements in families. This work will require the involvement of key partners including the Police, Job Centre Plus, Health, the Voluntary and Community Sector and Social Landlords. The involvement of the partners and a partnership approach is essential as evidence from the phase one authorities indicates the following issues will have to be addressed:
 - Health
 - Anti social behaviour
 - School attendance
 - Unemployment
 - Potential eviction

- 3.2 Nationally the programme and government expectations are still being developed. On 22 December 2011, Joe Tuke, Director Troubled Families Team wrote to local authority Chief Executives to set out the current position in respect of the national programme. In addition to the work reported in point 3.0, there is a wish by government that local authorities will upscale their plans in respect of the numbers of families they will involve in the programme. Wirral has been identified by government as having 900 families with complex needs. Additional funding of £20,000 will be made available to resource the identification of the families across Wirral who would be judged as having complex needs. The government criteria for families to be included in this work are outlined in point 3.2.
- 3.3 Using national information and local operational knowledge the following is proposed as the criteria by which the families will be identified for support from the Community Budgets programme. Families being referred would be meeting a number of the criteria listed below.
- Poverty
 - Poor Social Housing
 - Long term unemployed
 - Permanent exclusion from education
 - Physical and mental health problems
 - Involvement in crime and anti social behaviour
 - Addiction to alcohol and or drugs
 - Domestic violence
 - Children on the edge of care
 - Families with children in care
 - Children placed at home with parents
 - The degree of existing involvement
- 3.4 The letter from Joe Tuke also indicated that an additional £100,000 would be made available each year from April 2012 until 2015. The level of funding available is linked to the estimated number of families with complex needs on Wirral. The funding is expected to cover the recruitment of a coordinator to head up the work with identified families and also to lever in the support of partners. It is expected that the coordinators will be employed by the local authority however they could be employed by one of the partner organisations. In addition the funding can be used to cover data analysts, and other support requirements to ensure delivery of the programme. The expectation is that the 900 families will have moved out of complex needs by March 2015. Although the agreed numbers of families will have to be involved the numbers on the programme at any one time is a local decision. Please see attached Appendix A for the government's proposal for the role and expectations of coordinators.
- 3.5 The letter of the 22nd December also indicated that local authorities could be involved in a Payment by Results approach whereby 40% of the total cost of the up scaled approach could be reimbursed if the agreed results were achieved. This is

work in progress centrally and authorities at this stage have not been asked to indicate their willingness to be involved in Payment By Results. What is not clear is if the £100,000 for the coordinators will still be made available to local authorities if they do not take part in Payment By Results. Further guidance is awaited.

4.0 Progress

- 4.1 Work on a project proposal is currently in hand and this will be reported to Cabinet for approval on 26 March. It is still intended to implement the original proposal to target the work in a specific locality. This would form the operational base from which to upscale the work in line with government's expectations. There are a number of areas such as working practices and working across boundaries which need to be addressed. The approach outlined in paragraph 3 allows the work to start and as it is implemented, identify the necessary workforce changes to be made.
- 4.2 Work has started to identify the families who meet the criteria as outlined in 3.2 and the additional £20,000 will fund the resource to complete this work. Work on the project proposal will be completed by the end of January 2012. If the project proposal is approved by Cabinet this will form the basis for locality work on Community Budgets. By April the number of families who will require this intervention will be known. Work will have started in one locality and this will be the base from which the work can be up scaled to meet national expectations.
- 4.3 In respect of the locality work it is envisaged that 50 families will be involved. There will be one key worker for ten families. Key worker posts will be met from existing resources. Given that partner agencies will have an involvement with the families identified and that any improvements will benefit all involved, partners will be expected to nominate staff. It is intended that the £100,000 will support the implementation of the programme and that this approach will reduce the demand for costly intensive support.

5.0 Finance

- 5.1 Apart from the additional £20,000 and the possible £100,000 grant there is no additional funding to implement this programme. It is estimated that the locality Community Budget programme will require five key workers at an approximate cost of £200,000 to be met from existing resources.

6.0 Recommendations:

That Wirral Children's Trust Board note the report.

Appendix 1 Troubled Families Coordinators

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