

GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Date: 26th March 2021
Subject: Troubled Families Funding
Report of: GM Mayor, Andy Burnham

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

The report provides an update on the position of the Troubled Families funding for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The GMCA is requested to:

1. GMCA are recommended to agree the allocation of Troubled Families funding for 2020/21 to all GM districts in line with the previously agreed process,
2. GMCA are recommended to note the announcement of a further years funding for the Troubled Families Funding for 2021/22.

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BOLTON
BURY

MANCHESTER
OLDHAM

ROCHDALE
SALFORD

STOCKPORT
TAMESIDE

TRAFFORD
WIGAN

Equalities Implications:

The Troubled Families Programme works with families from a diverse range of background and communities. Every effort is made to ensure that support offered to families reflects their specific needs and circumstances.

Climate Change Impact Assessment and Mitigation Measures –

N/A

Risk Management:

Delivery of the Troubled Families programme is overseen by local audit teams working to a common GM audit framework that reports to the GMCA Audit team.

Legal Considerations:

N/A

Financial Consequences – Revenue:

N/A

Financial Consequences – Capital:

Failure to approve release of funding would directly impact on funding currently being used by Local Authorities to provide early help services to families and support service transformation. This would have an impact on Local Authorities to work with their allocation of families and meet the minimum requirements of the national Troubled Families programme.

Number of attachments to the report: 0**Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

TRACKING/PROCESS	
Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution	Yes / No
EXEMPTION FROM CALL IN	
Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?	
GM Transport Committee	Overview & Scrutiny Committee

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In 2017 central Government and GMCA reached an agreement that Greater Manchester would operate outside the national financial framework for the programme and that GM would receive the totality of its allocation of funding through the GM Reform Investment Fund rather than operating under a payment by results arrangement. The main driver for this was that with more upfront funding would better enable GM to drive service transformation whilst still delivering on the requirements of the national programme. In line with the agreement GM provides evidence around the appropriate use of funding and performance on an annual basis as part of an agreed assurance process.
- 1.2 At the start of 2020/21 GM Local Authorities were allocated a total of £10,772,320 on the understanding that GM would collectively work with a total 6,263 families. In recognition of the immediate impact of Covid-19 lockdown some referral routes this figure was revised to a target of 4,697 families in line with the rest of the country.
- 1.3 The information in this report seeks to provide a summary of the position across GM in relation to use of Troubled Families funding, the response to Covid-19 and performance. It is based on a combination of information provided to GMCA through the completion of a standard template by Local Authorities and data / intelligence held or compiled by GMCA.

2.0 USE OF TROUBLED FAMILIES FUNDING IN 2020/21

2.1 All GM Local Authorities have recently submitted information relating to their use of Troubled Families funding over the past 12 months. This included details of any significant changes from what was described in the most recent version of their investment plan (that was last updated in January 2020), the development of their local early help offer and further details relating to their response to the Covid-19 pandemic. In summary

- Most districts have spent the funding as planned at the beginning of 2020
- There is variation in the extent to which funding is being used to cover the direct costs of services versus enablers – driven by a range of factors including levels of funding, where TF funding sits alongside alternative sources of funding and current priorities in the district.
- Some areas have increased capacity of their core early help teams in order to support more families either through more direct investment or through restructures.
- Most GM districts are positioning the ‘team around the school’ model as a central part of their early help offer.
- There are examples of TF funding being used to tackle issues that have been exasperated by Covid-19 particularly additional investment in roles designed to help families experiencing domestic abuse.

2.2 Following a meeting with the Director of the Troubled Families Unit held in early February the Troubled Families Unit have now confirmed that Ministers have agreed that GM’s allocation of funding should be released.

3.0 PERFORMANCE

3.1 GM had a revised target to attach and achieve successful outcomes with 4,697 families. By the end of 2020 we had collectively identified and worked with 5,335 (114%) families and recorded successful outcomes for 4,163 (89%) families. GM is therefore confident that we’ll be able to reach 100% of our target for 2020/21.

3.2 From our own evaluation of the Troubled Families cohort in Greater Manchester we continue to see positive results in relation the number of families that don’t escalate to need support from Children’s Social Care, with 59% of our families supported at Early Help level remaining at that level and 65% of families supported ‘stepped down’ to universal support level by the point at which the intervention ‘ends’.

4.0 THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

4.1 Covid-19 has impacted the delivery of Troubled Families programme in Greater Manchester on a number of levels:

4.1.1 **Families** – The full extent of the impact of Covid-19 on the lives of vulnerable families is still be realised but based on intelligence gathered over recent months issues around poverty, mental health, domestic abuse / family conflict are more pronounced. There is also evidence that there have been more requests for financial help/debt advice and practical support around food parcels for many families, a number of

whom may not have been previously known to services. We are continuing to build our understanding of the full impact of families and welcome the opportunity to work with Government departments as this develops.

4.1.2 **Referral rates** – We have been tracking the pattern of Early Help referrals in GM over the last 12 months in an attempt to understand the impact of lockdown/school closures on demand for Early Help services. Given schools are an important source of referrals and early help assessments as might be expected we saw a downward trend in most districts in March 2020 as schools closed for the first national lockdown. The referral rate then started to rise again above typical for that time of year levels once schools re-opened. We are continuing to monitor demand for early help at both the local and GM level in order to understand the impact of the latest lockdown and demand for support more generally.

4.1.3 **Service Delivery** – Early Help services in GM have experienced many of the same challenges as other services including having to adapt to home working arrangements. With more limited options for face to face contact they have had to adapt quickly and move contact with some families online. There are mixed views around the impact of this with some citing improved engagement from some family members and others describing the additional challenges with building relationships, particularly for families that had only recently been identified for support. Notably most areas continued to carry out home visits for families that based on an assessment of risk and when it was deemed that this was required.

Most, if not all early help services were heavily involved / connected with the work of the community hubs that have been stood up across GM to support the response to the pandemic providing valuable intelligence or pro-actively engaging families identified as particularly vulnerable. The engagement of early help teams with schools has also been a critical part of the response.

4.1.4 **Delivery of the Troubled Families programme**

The pandemic has also impacted on a couple of areas related to GM arrangements for delivery of the national programme:

Completion of Troubled Families Audits – these are usually conducted on an annual basis by individual Local Authority Audit teams working to a common framework with responses then provided back to GMCA Audit team as part of our assurance process for the programme. This usually includes a mix of case reviews, data checks and discussions with operational staff, however the impact on the pandemic including remote working and diversion of audit resources has made this challenging to complete. We will be working with Troubled Families Lead Officers and local audit teams to progress the completion of the audits in the first part of 2021/22.

5.0 **FUNDING FOR 2021/22**

5.1 MHCLG have now confirmed that subject to assurances on use of funding and performance GMCA can expect to receive a further allocation of £10,926,200 Troubled Families funding in 2021/22 on the understanding that we collectively work with a minimum of 4,754 families. The table below provides details of the volume of

families each district will be expected to successfully engage in 2021/22 and the total funding it can expect to receive. In line with the current arrangements this funding is expected to be received towards the end of the financial year.

	Original allocation of families for Phase 2 of the programme	20/21 alloaction of families	21/22 alloaction of families	Revised total families for Phase 2 of the programme	Total funding for 2021/22	% of funding allocated to each area
Bolton	2,794	482	488	3,764	£1,075,962	9.85%
Bury	1,297	224	226	1,747	£499,472	4.57%
Manchester	8,023	1,384	1,401	10,808	£3,089,635	28.28%
Oldham	2,289	395	400	3,083	£881,487	8.07%
Rochdale	2,272	392	397	3,061	£874,941	8.01%
Salford	2,810	485	491	3,785	£1,082,124	9.90%
Stockport	1,903	328	332	2,564	£732,840	6.71%
Tameside	2,088	360	365	2,813	£804,083	7.36%
Trafford	1,213	209	212	1,634	£467,122	4.28%
Wigan	2,541	438	444	3,423	£978,532	8.96%
GM Funding					£440,000	4.03%
GM Total	27,230	4,697	4,754	36,681	£10,926,200	100%

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The last 12 months have presented unprecedented challenges for both families and the services that seek to help support them. We anticipate increased demand for early help support in our communities over the next 12 months (from targeted services, universal services and other support networks) as families feel the impact of the economic and social harms created by the pandemic. Therefore more than ever it is important that families can get the type of help they need as early as possible. GMCA will continue to work with GM Districts to drive improvement of our early help offer, create the space for us to share practice and make the best use of data. Alongside colleagues in the Troubled Families Unit we will also continue to make the case for continued and more sustainable funding for early help services over the next few years.