

Stronger Families Newsletter #4: November



Stronger Families Family success in Trafford

Figures recently published by the Troubled Families unit down in Whitehall, show that Trafford have been doing a fantastic job with both identifying who its Stronger Families are, and are getting positive results once they begin working with families.

We are almost 18months into a three year initiative and are well on track to help turn the lives around of all families in Trafford that meet the Troubled Families criteria. Recently, Government proposed an extension of the Stronger Families programme past 2015, stating that there were still lots of complex families who don't meet the criteria in our regions, and that we should focus our attentions on them next. Figures from July suggest that we are more than capable of meeting the current challenge, and will be well equipped to extend the 'Stronger Families Offer' beyond 2015.

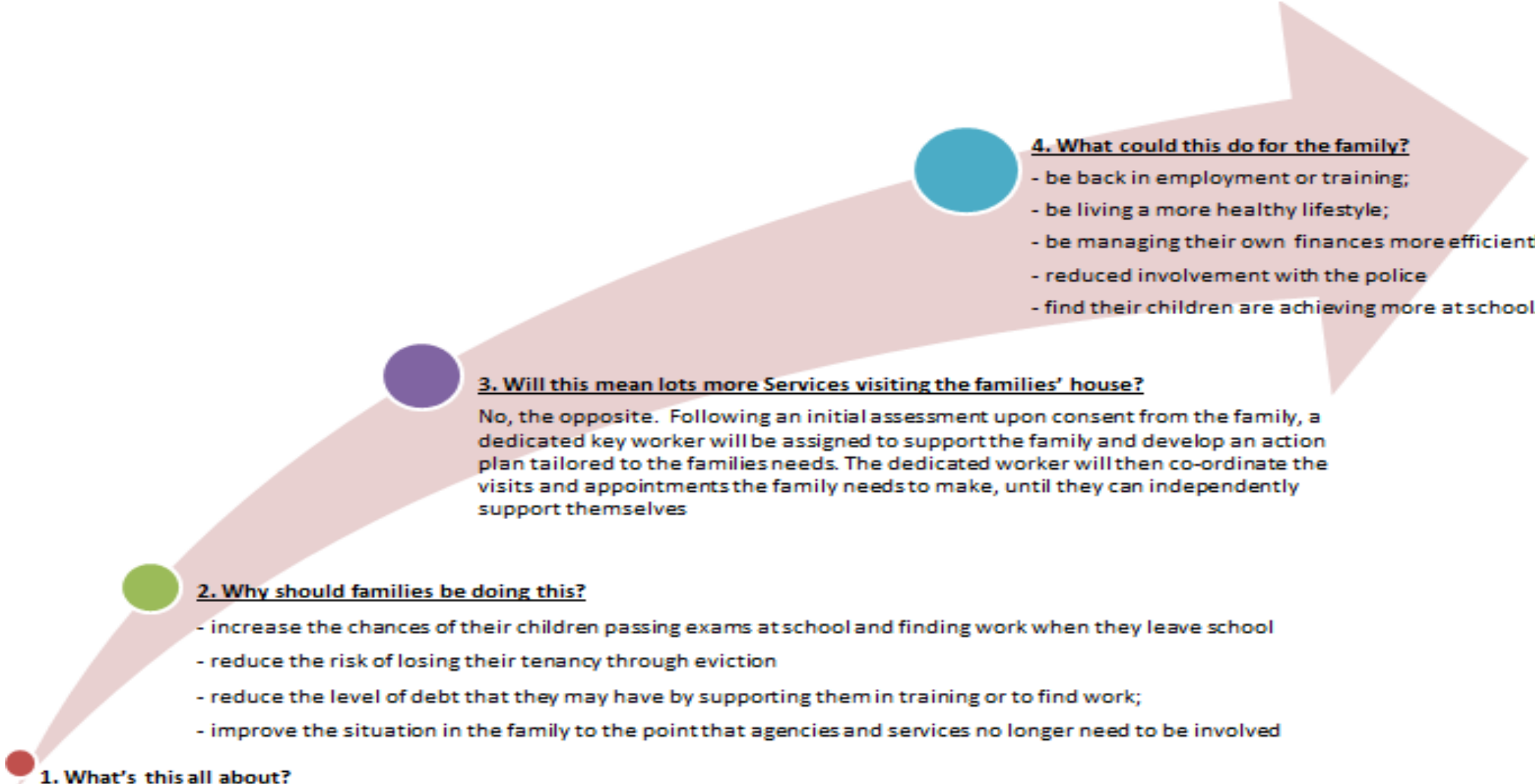
Number of Stronger Families Identified as of July 13	No. of Stronger Families where we have already prevented further crime/ASB	No. of Stronger Families where we have already had success in improving school sustained school attendance
173	20	20

Ensuring we use SMART Targets

One of the ways in which practitioners have enabled the Stronger Families initiative to have the success it has, is the use of 'SMART' targets when developing Family Action Plans. Although we are all encouraged to use SMART targets in our work, very often there is some confusion around the what it actually means in reality. Using SMART targets not only enables the families themselves to understand what is expected of them, but that extra clarity can ultimately lead the family to taking ownership of the target, especially when they have been involved. Below is a small table which practitioners can use to help them during the target setting process.

Specific:	Is the objective precise and well defined? Is it clear? Can everyone understand it?
Measurable:	How will the individual know when the task is complete? What evidence is needed? Have you stated how you will judge if it's been completed?
Achievable:	Is it within their capabilities? Are there sufficient resources available to enable this to happen? Can it be done at all
Realistic:	Is it possible for the individual to perform the objective? How sensible is the objective in light of the current context?
Timely:	Is there a deadline? Is it feasible to meet the deadline? Is it appropriate to do the work now? Are there review dates?

The Stronger Families Offer: We have recently received feedback from frontline staff that it would be helpful to them if we could provide them a leaflet which they could pass onto the families themselves explaining in plain language what the Stronger Families initiative is and what it will mean for them. This leaflet is currently being pulled together, but while this is happening, please find below some of the key messages that will be included so that you can start to pass on these messages or prepare yourself for future meetings with families.



1. What's this all about?

Trafford Council and it's Partners have recently agreed that they need to work more smartly alongside families to help the families themselves to take control of their lives and give them the opportunities they need for a better future. In Trafford this is known as 'Stronger Families', and as a Stronger Family they are entitled to an improved package of support to help them and their family improve their current situation..

2. Why should families be doing this?

- increase the chances of their children passing exams at school and finding work when they leave school
- reduce the risk of losing their tenancy through eviction
- reduce the level of debt that they may have by supporting them in training or to find work;
- improve the situation in the family to the point that agencies and services no longer need to be involved

3. Will this mean lots more Services visiting the families' house?

No, the opposite. Following an initial assessment upon consent from the family, a dedicated key worker will be assigned to support the family and develop an action plan tailored to the families needs. The dedicated worker will then co-ordinate the visits and appointments the family needs to make, until they can independently support themselves

4. What could this do for the family?

- be back in employment or training;
- be living a more healthy lifestyle;
- be managing their own finances more efficiently;
- reduced involvement with the police
- find their children are achieving more at school.