

Appendix 2

The National Troubled Families Initiative: Background to the Loss of Funding in 2019/20 (£560,000)

1. The national Troubled Families Initiative (TFI) has been in existence since 2012, supporting local authorities to work intensively with vulnerable families across a range of circumstances. In West Sussex the aims of the national initiative have been strongly endorsed through the local programme known as Think Family, led by the IPEH service.
2. In all respects, West Sussex has been notably successful in delivering the TFI programme. In the period 2012-2020, when the programme closes, it is expected that a total of over 5,000 families will have made significant and sustained progress against strict national criteria. The impact of the programme is subject to a national evaluation. Locally it is clear that Think Family interventions do make a significant positive difference to maintaining family stability, and reduce demand and expenditure in higher cost services, including Children's Social Care. National programme evaluation has endorsed these findings.
3. In spite of the success of Think Family in West Sussex however, there remains further unmet need for Early Help services. As a result, although government funding for Troubled Families is being withdrawn from April 2020, this County Council, in common with many other public sector organisations, has been lobbying government regarding the desirability of a successor scheme that continues the momentum of Troubled Families, and addresses the need. No decision on this has yet been forthcoming.
4. This savings proposal is therefore based on the known reduction in government grant for 2019/20 of £560,000. It is due to the tailing-off of the element of grant that is paid when a family with qualifying characteristics is 'attached' to the programme, to be worked with. West Sussex was given a quota of 3,940 families to be worked with over the five years to March 2020, and according to the scheme protocols, only 5% of these families can be attached in the final year: this reflects the time necessary to achieve and evidence success with a family, and also the government's expectations of a consistent throughput of families during the life of the programme. The issue is therefore one of the phasing of grant: the entire grant available in each year of the programme to date has been secured, and through helping the maximum number of families, we expect also to maximise income to its closure.