

## **Challenge Fund for Social Housing Family Intervention Projects**

### **1. What is the Challenge Fund?**

The Challenge Fund is a new initiative between central Government, social landlords and children's services to expand provision of funding Family Intervention Projects (FIPS) for tenants in social housing who are facing possible eviction or other enforcement action due to antisocial behaviour or other problems.

This £15m Challenge Fund includes £7.5 million central funding in (£5m from DCSF and £2.5m from CLG) to be matched by £7.5m from social housing providers. Funding post March 2011 is planned but not confirmed.

The fund can be used to extend existing FIPs or to start new projects. For example, funding might be used to add new workers to focus on the needs of a particular estate or landlord, to cover the needs of other social landlords locally or to help an existing FIP to adopt new ways of working, such as by opening a core unit. Where funding is used to start a new project, the relationship to any existing FIPs locally must be clear.

*Bidding to the fund will be open in November 2010, more details of launch events and bidding opportunities will be published here soon.*

### **2. What is a FIP?**

Family Intervention Projects (or FIPs) work with the most challenging and high risk families to tackle anti social behaviour and other family problems and to prevent eviction or other sanctions being applied. They are a key part of government support for families at risk led by DCSF but with cross government backing and funding.

FIP key workers provide intensive round the clock support to families, reinforced through a behaviour contract. Intensive, practical support to the whole family can include measures to help establish routines, get children back into school, support parents with mental health, substance abuse or offending behaviours.

FIPs are currently being established in all local authorities. Some FIPs focus on families involved in persistent anti-social behaviour or youth crime, others on tackling and preventing offending and reducing child poverty and inter-generational disadvantage.

The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 created the 'Family Intervention' Tenancy (FIT), a new type of insecure tenancy available for use by Local Authorities and Registered Social landlords. Under the FIT, families are provided with accommodation on a non secure tenancy, which can become secure (or assured) on successful completion of their work with the FIP.

Research has shown that the features which make FIPs successful are:

- high quality staff managing small caseloads

- A dedicated key worker who supports a family and works intensively with them for as long as necessary
- A whole family approach including tailored support for all family members,
- Scope to use resources creatively such as helping families to decorate and improve their environment
- Using contracts agreed with families and agencies which support them clearly setting out any sanctions the family is facing eg eviction, ASBOs etc

Independent research has also demonstrated the effectiveness of FIPs in tackling ASB and maintaining tenancies. Provisional figures for the 699 families who formally completed an intervention by March 2009 show that

- The proportion of families not involved in ASB increased from 10 to 66 per cent during the intervention
- Only 6 per cent of families had four or more ASB issues at completion compared with 46 per cent at the start of the intervention
- The proportion of families with housing enforcement actions against them fell from 47 to 15 per cent during the intervention, and those with NOSP against them fell from 15 to 4 per cent
- Levels of ASB were considerably lower for all forms of ASB reported at the end of the intervention compared to the beginning.

More detailed evidence from this research will be published here in November 2009; guidance on the FIP model can be downloaded from [www.dcsf.gov.uk/ecm/thinkfamily](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ecm/thinkfamily)

### **3. Why social Housing Providers?**

Social tenants appear to suffer most from antisocial behaviour: British Crime Survey data indicates that 29% of social renters consider ASB a problem or a serious problem in their area, compared to 18% of private renters and 13% of owner-occupiers. Hence, working through social housing providers has the potential to improve the lives of people suffering from crime and ASB.

From the perspective of the social housing provider, dealing with ASB is costly, and time consuming; the long-term effects on communities can be far reaching, whilst in many communities, the majority of the ASB is caused by a very small number of households. Every year there are an estimated 3,700 evictions due to ASB, many of which result in problems being shifted to another area, rather than resolved.

Landlords who already operate FIPs have found that the FIP is not only effective in tackling the behaviour of the minority of tenants who cause ASB and disruption in their communities, but that improvements in family relationships and positive parenting have wider knock-on effects on the whole community. [Hyperlink to Poplar Harca case study \(attached\).](#)

Wider outcomes can include:

- Reduced evictions
- Reduced risk of homelessness and housing enforcement actions
- Reduced management costs associated with dealing with ASB and

- other complaints
- Reduced costs of criminal damage and repairs
- Reduced void costs as an area becomes more popular
- Increased tenant satisfaction
- Increased school attendance, engagement in work or training, and positive health outcomes for families
- Improved parenting skills and positive family relationships

Landlords have responsibilities for dealing with ASB, and powers to tackle it, using warning letters, injunctive powers, ASBOs, ABCs and parenting orders. The TSA regulatory framework (due for publication early November) will require social landlords to have an ASB strategy, and to be working effectively with the local authority/other agencies to reduce ASB in their communities; they should have a response to asb problems which is proportionate to the extent of the problem within their properties. Whilst the regulatory framework cannot prescribe how landlords achieve the outcomes required, it will refer to FIPs as an effective intervention in tackling asb.

#### **4. How will the Challenge Fund work?**

There will be an open bidding round, with bidding guidance launched in November .

If you want to be notified when the detailed guidance is published, please register here – [link to registration form](#).

Central funding will be channelled through local authority children’s services.

We would encourage social housing providers and Children’s Services to begin working together on developing proposals now, using the outline criteria below.

There will be a three to four week period between the launch of the bidding guidance and the closing date for submission of bids. Bids will be evaluated before Christmas, with final grant confirmation to in early January, allowing project development, including recruitment, to take place January-March, for an April launch.

For more advice on the bidding process, contact :

[housingchallengefund.mailbox@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:housingchallengefund.mailbox@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk)

For more advice or information about FIPs already operating in your area, who you may work with in developing a bid, please register to be put in touch with your regional Family Delivery Team Advisor.

#### **5. Outline bid criteria**

The following are initial outline criteria only; finalised bidding guidance and evaluation criteria should be available in the week beginning 9<sup>th</sup> November

2009.

- Any social housing provider may bid, but all bids must be made jointly by social housing providers and Children's Services. In two tier areas, the local strategic housing authority should also support the bid.
- Bids from partnerships will be welcomed. Partnerships can include a number of social housing providers, and can extend over more than one local authority area, where this is practical.
- Any bid including more than one housing provider should identify a lead housing provider, who has a strong presence and good reputation locally
- Bids may be to develop a new FIP or to extend existing projects. Extending projects can include recruiting new FIP keyworkers to serve specific areas/ estates/ landlords, or to widen the remit of a FIP.
- If the bid is for a new FIP, and there is already a FIP in the area, or nearby, the bid must show how the FIPS will work together and the relationship between the families targeted by the different projects.
- Bids should show match funding, which may include in-kind contributions such as salaries of seconded staff (appropriately qualified and skilled), as well as cash funding. Match funding may be provided by any local partner(s).
- Programmes receiving funding will be required to launch by April 2010, and to comply with the monitoring framework and grant conditions already in place for existing FIPs. The monitoring system is currently operated by NatCen .
- Funding is for 2010/11 initially; funding for future years cannot be confirmed at this stage, but there is an intention to support projects beyond 2011