

CONFIDENTIAL

Evaluation of Rochdale Families Project

Narratives of Family Backgrounds, Interventions and Outcomes

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Introduction

This report provides an account of the circumstances of the 14 case study families, the forms of the Rochdale Families Project (RFP) interventions and the outcomes of, and reflections on, each case. The material for each case study is based upon interviews with adult family members and RFP workers, survey returns from family members and RFP workers and data provided by RFP, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing and Greater Manchester Police. Each narrative is accompanied by a progress journey map. All data has been anonymised and pseudonyms are used throughout.

Family A

Background

The family household comprises a mother, her boyfriend and her son, Cody, aged 13. The RFP works solely with the mother; Cody is supported by a Youth Inclusion Project. The family were referred to RFP in December 2009. The mother indicated that she wanted the RFP to help address the family's debt issues and find a school place for Cody. A number of agencies were involved with the family including the police, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, targeted youth support, the Children and Families Services Team, At Work and Skills 4 U.

The mother had been a victim of domestic violence and had also experienced a bereavement following the death of her infant child. She suffered from, and was receiving treatment for, depression. She was considered to be very vulnerable within her area and has received a conviction for drug offences linked to her son. She used cannabis regularly and struggled to provide routines and boundaries for Cody. The family struggled financially and were unable to provide clothes for Cody. Cody was described as a quiet boy who lacked confidence. He had very limited social skills and very poor literacy and numeracy skills. He did not attend mainstream schooling, and had attended an exclusion unit for nine months. He also suffered from fits.

Cody had been involved in very serious anti-social behaviour, linked to his involvement with a negative peer group of much older boys. Cody had hidden cannabis and a weapon in the family home. A Notice of Seeking Possession had been served by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, in November 2009, just prior to the RFP intervention, on grounds of anti-social behaviour due to Cody possessing drugs which were found by the police at the property during the execution of the warrant. There had been no other complaints to Rochdale Boroughwide Housing about nuisance behaviour in the 12 months preceding the RFP intervention. The family had a manageable level of rent arrears, which had decreased in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention.

There were seven recorded police incidents involving the family in the 12 months preceding the RFP intervention. In addition to possession of cannabis, incidents related to concern for safety of a child, rowdy behaviour, breach of the peace and intimidation of a neighbour. Two incidents involved the family as victims, including damage to the property and harassment/domestic violence.

The condition of the family home was a major problem and in particular the very old and dilapidated kitchen. At the time of referral to the RFP, Cody was sleeping in his mother's bedroom. This was believed to be due the condition of his own bedroom and the emotional impact of the domestic violence that he had witnessed when he was younger.

Progress and Interventions: December 2009 to September 2010

At the point of referral, the RFP worker facilitated a multi-agency meeting to establish each agency's engagement and work with the family. These multi-agency meetings continued to be convened throughout the intervention period.

The RFP worker had attempted to address the condition of the family home and liaised with the landlord, who subsequently provided a new kitchen. The RFP worker also worked with the Youth Inclusion Project to organise getting Cody's room painted. Cody and his friends, together with the Youth Inclusion Project worker, spent a day painting the room which apparently they really enjoyed. RFP provided part of the cost for the materials, whilst the family also made a contribution.

Since working with the Children and Family Services Team, the mother had reduced her debt significantly. She had also attended a group therapy session consisting of a four week course to help parents take the first steps to change. The RFP explored the possibility of family therapy, but although the mother agreed to participate, Cody refused.

Despite witnessing the domestic violence, Cody still wanted a relationship with his father. The RFP worker reported that a lot of practical progress had been achieved with the family but there was a need to address deep-rooted issues, particularly associated with Cody's father and his role within the family. The RFP made a referral to the Community Space Challenge initiative to assist Cody in creating positive relationships with RFP workers and developing Cody's social skills. It was also reported that, since working with the Children and Family Services Team, Cody has distanced himself from the negative older peer group and had engaged with the Youth Inclusion Project.

Cody had been examined by doctors in relation to the fits he suffered from. At the end of May 2010, the RFP worker organised a supported transition to reintegrate Cody into mainstream schooling. Cody began to attend a mainstream school in September 2010, but within two weeks he had been excluded. It was believed that the original school transfer had not been effectively managed as Cody had attended the new school without the correct uniform or shoes.

Progress and Interventions: September 2010 to December 2010

The RFP had coordinated a twelve week trial of a managed move to another high school. The home conditions were reported to have improved dramatically since the RFP intervention and the RFP was continuing to engage with the mother to seek to build her skills. She was now engaged with Skills 4 U support, which was believed to have assisted her and she was actively seeking employment. The RFP referred Cody to CAMHS in order to begin to address the issues relating to his experience, and witnessing, of domestic violence.

Cody began attending the new school but he was struggling to cope. The RFP were pursuing a statement of special educational need for Cody, based on his lack of numeracy, literacy and social skills. He was smoking cannabis and had begun to associate with a much older peer group. The RFP attempted to get Cody's mother to assume more responsibility. The family continued to be supported through home visits and Cody and his mother were offered counselling funded through the RFP due to the six month waiting list for CAMHS. The RFP workers had also sought to help with payment of bills and household management.

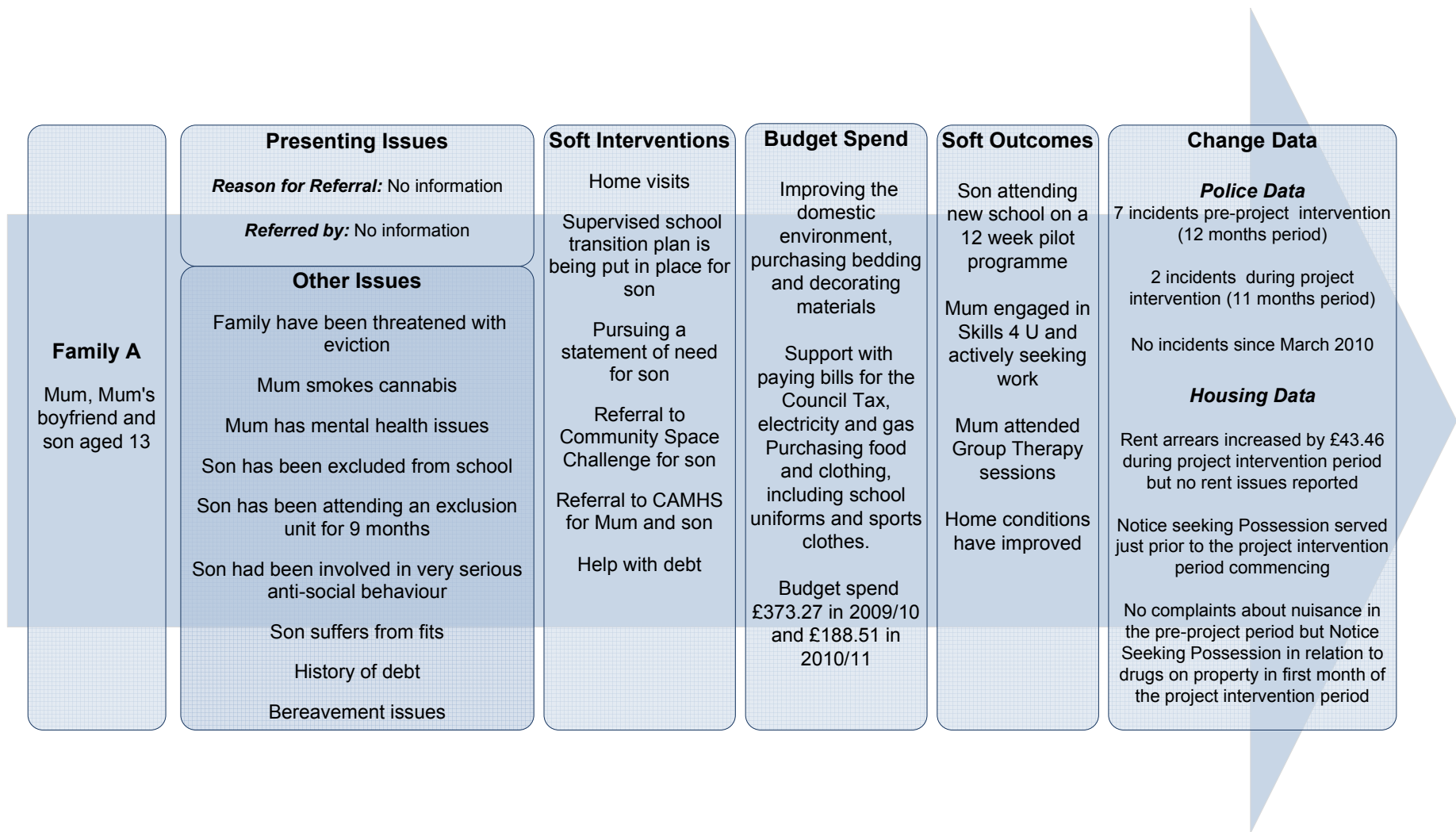
Reflections and Outcomes (December 2010)

The main item category of expenditure on the family was improving the domestic environment (£263.27). This included the purchase of bedding and decorating materials. The family also received support with paying bills for the Council Tax, electricity and gas and purchasing food and clothing, including school uniforms and sports clothes. The budget spend on the family was £373.27 in 2009/10 and £188.51 in 2010/11.

There had been a very small rise in rent arrears during the period of RFP intervention, but the level of arrears was viewed as being manageable and the family were on arrears direct payment to ensure the situation remained stable. There had been no complaints of nuisance behaviour to Rochdale Boroughwide Housing during the intervention period. In the period during RFP intervention there were two police incidents (compared to seven in the pre-RFP period). One incident related to rowdy behaviour and a second one was a burglary at the property. There were no recorded police incidents since March 2010.

The mother reported that the RFP had helped the family to decorate the front room and Cody's bedroom and she also believed that the RFP had helped with her debt issues and Cody accessing some form of education provision. She believed that the RFP workers had

been there when needed. She described the RFP worker as 'brill' but did state that the worker had sometimes missed arranged appointments with her.



Family B

Background

The family household comprises a mother, father, their daughters, Sarah, aged 16 and Blue, aged 11. An older sibling no longer lives at home. The family were referred to the RFP in December 2009 by a Criminal Justice Team substance misuse worker due to concerns about the parents' heroin misuse and the condition of the family home. At the time of the referral, the mother explained that she did not know anything about RFP and therefore didn't know what to expect or what really she wanted from them, although she did state retrospectively that she wished to receive help in coping with bereavement, having someone there for her and assistance in attending appointments. The fact that the RFP was voluntary made her more willing to engage with and work with the project.

The father had been absent from the household for some time due to domestic violence and the resultant family break up. However, the daughters were reported to get on well with their father, who had been staying temporarily at the family home, with no further domestic violence being reported.

The mother had Hepatitis C and was in poor health. She had also discovered a lump in her breast, but was reluctant to attend hospital and had missed a series of appointments. She had served a custodial sentence for shop lifting offences and was on probation. Since being released from prison she was subject to a Drug Treatment and Testing Order. Although the regular tests confirmed that she had stopped using heroin, she had developed an alcohol misuse problem. She explained that during this period she had 'gone 'off the rails' following her father's death. On one occasion she was reported to a police community support officer after collecting Blue from school while drunk.

The household had been subject to suspended eviction proceedings in 2006. There had also been an alleged incident of tampering with an electricity meter, but there had been no complaints of nuisance to the landlord in the 12 months preceding the RFP intervention. There was a modest and manageable level of rent arrears, which had reduced significantly in the 12 months preceding the RFP intervention. There had been seven recorded police incidents in the 12 months prior to RFP intervention. These included two incidents of shoplifting, one of theft and one of rowdy/inconsiderate behaviour. Three of the incidents related to the family as victims, including one burglary and two incidents of rowdy/inconsiderate behaviour.

Sarah was not in trouble with the police but had not attended school since 2009 and was frequently abusive to her mother. The RFP worker stated that Sarah refused to go to school with no apparent 'good reason.' According to her mother, the problem was with Sarah's teachers who 'were harsh with her.'

Blue was described by the RFP worker as being 'wild' on the estate where the family lived and was reported to be associating with a negative peer group. She had received detentions at school and was at risk of being excluded. Blue has been involved in petty theft and had been referred to The Youth Inclusion Project and the Youth Offending Team.

Progress and Interventions: December 2009 to May 2010

Two RFP workers were assigned to the family; working respectively with the parents and the two children. The parents' worker saw the family regularly, several times a week and sometimes twice a day if necessary. The RFP worker had been liaising with school and undertaking work with the mother around her drinking and the impact on the children. The RFP workers have been liaising with hospitals and had been taking the mother to hospital appointments. The parents' RFP worker had undertaken a number of practical activities such as registering the family with a dentist and arranging blood tests for Sarah and Blue to check whether they had contracted Hepatitis C. The RFP workers had also taken family members to other appointments, including probation, court and alcohol support.

The mother was accessing an alcohol worker and was attending Alcoholics Anonymous. She had also been referred to a detoxification programme which she completed successfully. The father had been referred to a substance misuse project based on group work and was reported to be participating positively.

A main aim of the RFP intervention was to reduce Blue's negative behaviour. The RFP worker had tried unsuccessfully to interest Blue in a dancing group. Blue was reported to have been making some progress, but this had deteriorated when her mother became ill. The RFP worker was intending to refer Blue to the counselling sessions funded by the RFP. Blue had also been referred to the Youth Inclusion Project.

Sarah had been attending alternative education three times a week organised and funded by the RFP, provided by Rochdale Connexions Trust, at a reduced cost. Sarah was reported to be making good progress and her mother provided an illustration of this, stating that Sarah would independently take the bus to these education sessions if an RFP worker was not

available, demonstrating her motivation to attend. Sarah's mother suggested that Sarah was keen to work in child care and would be attending a related course from September.

The condition of the family home was a concern and the RFP had provided financial and practical support to help improve the family's living conditions, included purchasing a bedroom carpet, bed and bedding and a fridge freezer. The RFP was also attempting to re-house the family's dogs at the request of the mother.

Progress and Interventions: June 2010 to December 2010

The mother underwent intensive treatment for Hepatitis C and had made some progress medically. There had been no problems with Sarah and Blue. The RFP workers had been taking the mother to hospital appointments and had also collected Blue from school while her mother had been undergoing her treatment. Sarah was still attending the Connexions educational provision. Blue started high school in September. The RFP made a contribution to purchasing her school uniform. The RFP worker had also taken Blue out to leisure activities or meals on several occasions. The family were reported to be spending more time together on days out, eating meals collectively etc.

The RFP referred the mother to a programme for families affected by substance misuse. She had attended a number of sessions, along with Sarah and Blue. Feedback from the programme suggested that the mother had engaged proactively and had 'been an absolute joy in the group.'

The father had moved back to the family home and had spent money on improving the family's home. The RFP worker said the house had been transformed and that this indicated that the family have finally 'had enough of living a drug lifestyle.'

The RFP worker had deliberately begun withdrawing from the family and reducing the number of visits because good progress has been made and 'they don't need me so much.' However, the RFP worker encouraged the mother to contact the RFP if she was struggling with anything.

By September 2010, although the mother continued to be unwell as a result of her medical treatment, she reported that things were 'really, really good.' She had not been drinking and the children had settled down. Blue was attending school and working with a CRI project for children at risk of offending. Sarah was attending a local college. However, the family were the subject of a housing management complaint with regard to one of the children shouting

and being abusive. The RFP worker was still taking the mother to hospital appointments but reported that significant progress continued to be made by the family. The family had also attended dental appointments. By November 2010 the family remained relatively stable, although the mother had cancelled some clinic appointments. However Blue's behaviour had been problematic: some neighbours had complained about her behaviour and she had received numerous detentions from school. As a result she was re-referred to the Youth Inclusion Project.

Reflections and Outcomes (December 2010)

The main item categories of expenditure on the family were improving the domestic environment and direct work/ referrals. This included the purchase of a bed and bedding, a carpet, a fridge freezer and the hire of a skip; and purchasing courses with RCT. The family also received support with paying bills for electricity and gas and purchasing food and clothing, including school uniforms. There was also some expenditure on activities and outings and transport. The budget spend on the family was £933.25 in 2009/10 and £265.55 in 2020/11.

Rent arrears decreased significantly during the RFP intervention period. There was one housing management complaint about noise and abusive behaviour at the family property during the RFP intervention period (there had been none in the previous 12 months). There was one recorded police incident during the RFP intervention period, related to a family member being a victim of an assault. There had been no recorded police incidents since April 2010. This compared with seven recorded police incidents in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention.

According to the RFP workers, the family engaged well with the project, but progress had sometimes been marked by periods of set-back: 'something always happens.' The parents' project worker said that what helped her effect change with this family was her awareness of how drink and drugs affect people and relationships. The RFP worker reported that:

'She's [mum] has made so much progress, I've been really, really chuffed. I said to her "you know you've really turned a corner"...It makes your job worthwhile when you see some positive change.'

The mother emphasised how much the RFP project worker has helped her and said that it was a shame that the RFP project was ending as there were a lot of other families that would benefit from it. She was very pleased with the intensity of the support provided by the

RFP and appreciated that even if there was no particular issue the IIP worker visited to enquire if everything was okay and had phoned most days 'to see if I'm alright.'

The mother was very positive about the support she had received from the RFP worker: 'you know she's been brilliant she really has, I can't big her up enough. All the support that they have given me has been fantastic.' Without the support of her RFP worker the mother suggested that she would have missed her probation appointments and would still have been misusing alcohol: 'I don't think I'd have got off the drink, more than likely would have messed me probation up.' She also believed that her parenting skills had improved and, specifically, that 'I am more being a parent to my kids instead of their friend.' The RFP worker had been someone she could trust and confide in, including addressing bereavement issues.

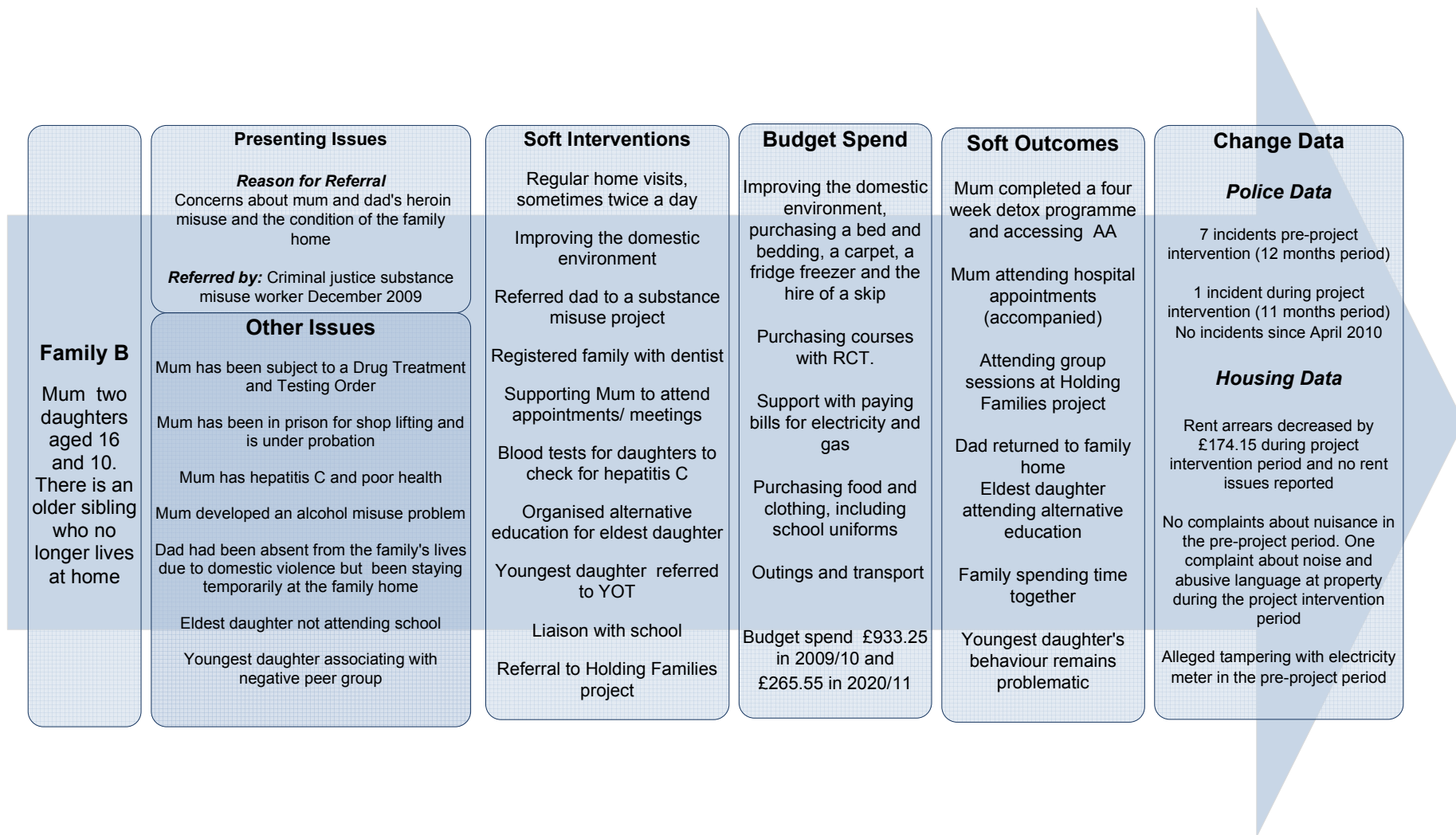
She was very grateful for the RFP financial support in purchasing essential household items and school uniforms. She also valued the way in which the RFP worker had supported her in diverse ways, practically (taking her to appointments, cleaning, decorating), materially (acquiring bedding etc for the family) and emotionally: 'Nothing's too much trouble for her...she just gets stuck in.' She appreciated that the RFP worker was genuinely concerned for her wellbeing, and although she recognised that her RFP worker was not a friend, she said that she did feel 'like a mate really.' The fact that the RFP was a voluntary and non-statutory intervention was also important: 'you know it's not feeling as if they're on your back sort of thing.' She did not identify any issue that she or her children required help or support with which had not been addressed by the RFP and she had recommended the RFP to other families that she knew in the area: 'It has been really, really good support for me...They are really good.'

The RFP intervention had been central to helping the mother make and sustain positive changes: '[the RFP worker] tells me to be strong...She gives me a kick up the backside.' Since being involved with the RFP the mother had also realised what help and support was available that she could benefit from.

The mother stated that the children's RFP worker had had less involvement with the family but that she had taken the children out for activities such as bowling and the cinema which the family could not afford. Contact had been more sporadic, although Sarah and Blue got on well with the RFP worker.

Although the mother perceived that the family circumstances were 'much better now', she said that she was not ready for the RFP to withdraw support, particularly in relation to managing her alcohol issues:

"They have been my saviour with all the help I've had off them and I will be devastated when it's closed and finished."



Family C

Background

The family household comprises a mother and her son, John, aged 14. The mother has two other younger children who live with their father (she has arranged access and contact time with them) and an older child who was homeless. The family were referred to the RFP in December 2009 by John's school due to his behaviour and attendance since returning from a period during which he was in foster care. There was a difficult relationship between the mother and father, who sometimes stayed at the family home. The mother had been a long term heroin and crack cocaine user and was currently on a methadone treatment programme. John had had been assigned a male family support worker. The mother had requested support to be re-housed due to historical problems connected to her drug misuse.

Before the older child moved out there had been problems at the property associated with drug dealers visiting the house and associated drug-related vandalism including smashed windows. The mother had paid money related to drug dealing to stop people coming to the home. There had been 12 recorded police incidents in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention. These included domestic violence, common assault, concern for safety of an adult (linked to an overdose) and an internal allegation of theft from the property against a member of the household. Seven of the incidents related to the family as victims, including four cases of burglary and theft, criminal damage and threats to damage. There had been one complaint about noise and abusive language and the behaviour of visitors at the property made to Rochdale Boroughwide Housing in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention. Rent arrears had increased slightly in the 12 months preceding the intervention, but were regarded as manageable.

For various reasons the mother felt that she has been let down by social workers in the past and she no longer trusted them. She claimed that when she had previously asked for their help in relation to the problems she had with her eldest son they offered her none but that when the father of her two young children reported her to social services recently they removed her three children without warning. At this time, the two younger children were placed in the care of their father and John had been placed in temporary care. During the periods that her children have been in care, the mother believed that social workers had failed to manage the process professionally and to keep her informed.

Progress and Interventions: December 2009 to June 2010

When referred to the RFP the mother said that she was keen to accept the support as she felt that she needed help with John's schooling and her drug problems. She also felt socially isolated as she had no friends or family who could offer her support. However, the mother continued to have concerns about John being taken into care and this affected her relationship with the RFP workers:

"I am scared to death of having John took off me and she [The project worker] said she wouldn't recommend for that but who does decide? They just decide by themselves, you get one that's having a bad day and doesn't know me, just reads all this stuff about me."

The RFP worker had contact with the family twice a week. The RFP had attempted to address housing issues and were trying to get the family re-housed. The RFP had agreed to pay off some of the family's housing arrears so they were eligible to be placed on the generic housing waiting list. The RFP worker had also accompanied family members to appointments, including providing emotional support and practical assistance to enable the mother to attend drugs counselling sessions. The RFP worker had also tried to address the family's financial situation, including ensuring that they accessed benefit entitlements and resolving an issue around a bank account.

Progress and Interventions: July 2010 to December 2010

The RFP worker continued to address finance problems. This included chasing up postal Job Seekers Allowance and tax credits payments. However it transpired that the mother had received these over the counter payments, but had not told the RFP worker this. The RFP worker described the focus of the intervention at this time as 'maintenance work' responding to the daily issues arising. Although the RFP worker believed that the mother was engaged and seemed to trust the worker, progress was envisaged as requiring a long period of time. The RFP has purchased essential shopping items for the family, which the mother said she really appreciated.

However, the mother was reluctant to address her substance misuse issues; she had accessed services before then dropped out. The RFP worker tried to encourage her to re-establish contact with drugs support services and had arranged appointments, but the mother had not attended due to illness. The RFP workers had accompanied the mother to hospital appointments. The mother had admitted to continuing heroin use, although the RFP workers believed that the extent of the use may be greater than was being acknowledged.

The mother no longer wished to be re-housed as she was anxious that the financial support provided by the RFP may not be available by the time the family moved. However, the RFP project would not help improve her housing conditions until she began engaging with the support and the drugs services. The older child was living in the family home again and was alleged to have stolen from the property and had reportedly been the subject of complaints to the police about noise and drunken rowdy behaviour (this is not confirmed by the police data). The family support worker has been engaged with John, picking him up and taking him into school and John was reported to have made good progress and occasionally attended school independently.

The RFP worker was conscious about creating a dependency culture and was trying to encourage the mother to become more independent:

"I don't want to create a dependency of "oh it's alright, the project worker will sort it." It's about "no you need to do this, I'll help you and guide you and give you the information but you need to get off your backside and do this yourself! It's your life, you need to take control". It's about getting that balance and it's not easy sometimes."

The RFP worker explained that her work with the family during September had mainly been crisis management. The worker had registered the mother at a dentist, and undertaken some one-to-one work with her. The mother had been in hospital for an operation. The RFP worker took her to hospital and spent a lot of time with her during this period. The mother was attending a drugs support group but was still using heroin, though less regularly. Her financial management was still problematic, exacerbated by her use of drugs. The position remained that the RFP would assist in redecorating the family property only if the mother show more commitment (she owed some money to the project).

John was not attending school and RFP worker had liaised with the Education Welfare Officer about this. The older child had been convicted of aggravated burglary and had been sentenced to three years in prison; this was viewed positively by both the mother and the RFP worker as it would enable some progress and provide the older child with support in prison. The amount of contact with the family had been intensive during this period.

In October, the mother reported that she has been seeing the RFP worker all the time, including taking her to drugs appointments up to three times a week. It was reported that the mother had stopped using heroin and was only using methadone and smoking cannabis. She was also attending a CRI project. She had a lapse but the RFP worker had provided reassurance and the mother was seeing more of her other family members because she was not using drugs. The mother had also been referred to the Wellbeing group and RFP-

funded counselling. The RFP worker took John and his mother out for a meal which the mother really appreciated.

John was in alternative educational provision at a college four days per week, following the closure of his school. He was reported to enjoy the college and there had been no problems with his attendance. He had also been referred to a Community Space Challenge project.

The mother had spent some benefit money on cleaning products and the bathroom in her home had been sorted out. This was viewed as a major step forward. The RFP workers had assisted home improvements and a new carpet and got John involved in these activities as a mechanism for making future progress self-sustaining. The RFP worker was attempting to access funds to purchase a new carpet and help her improve her home environment.

The project worker was starting to address underlying issues but was wary of assuming that recent positive changes would be sustained as these could often be reversed by crises and the fluid nature of the family's circumstances. However, progress was believed to have been made, with the older child being sent to prison being an important influencing factor in enabling recent positive changes. The RFP worker was considering an exit strategy for the family.

Reflections and Outcomes (at December 2010)

The main item categories of expenditure on the family were support in paying bills, purchasing clothing and improving the domestic environment. This included paying electricity and gas bills and housing (rent) arrears and purchasing clothes and shoes. The family received support in purchasing a carpet and paint. Outings, transport and key documents (birth certificates) were also purchased. The budget spend on the family was £21.30 in 2009/10 and £541.02 in 2010/11.

In the period during the RFP intervention there was one recorded police incident, relating to domestic violence. There had been no recorded incidents since May 2010, which compared to 12 incidents in the preceding 12 months. Rent arrears had increased by over £1,000 during the RFP intervention period, due to an unresolved Housing Benefit claim issue. There were no recorded housing management complaints during the RFP intervention period.

The mother stated that the voluntary nature of the RFP and its apparent distinction from social services had been important in securing her initial engagement:

"I don't actually know how it come about, she said it was voluntary my part, she said she was a family worker, I didn't know she was a social worker. I'll be truthful cos I wouldn't have got involved."

When she did realise that the RFP project worker was connected to social services, she was not concerned as she considered the worker to be 'genuine.' The mother appreciated the intensity and availability of the RFP support:

"She's helped me a lot...She does a lot, if I have a problem she'll come up and see me as soon as she can...I just text her before to say "can you ring me?" she rung me more or less straight away and said 'right I'll be there in 15 minutes'."

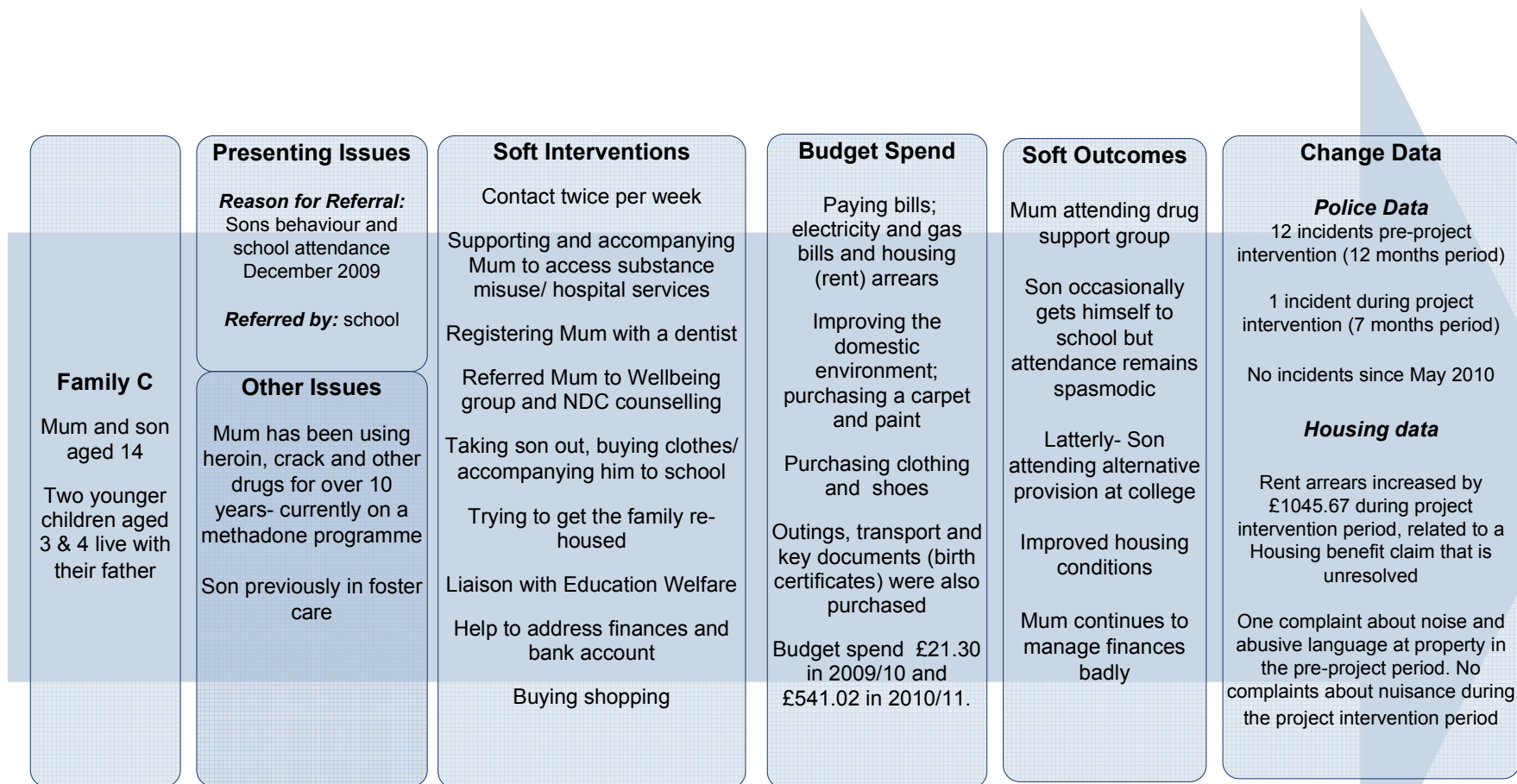
She particularly appreciated the RFP worker accompanying her to appointments such as drug counselling:

"She's just been there really to help me and taking me to appointments which is a big thing 'cause I don't like going out on me own so...even if she just comes with me the first couple of times just to build a bit of confidence."

"I just need a bit of pushing, 'cause I've got someone there who wants to help me and I want to help myself and it really helps, 'cause I've not always got bus fare and it does really help with her."

The relationship that the mother established with the RFP worker appeared to be a key factor in why the mother found the project beneficial. The RFP worker was perceived to care, and to be non-judgemental, particularly in relation to the fact that the mother was a drug user. The fact that the RFP was local was important to the mother, as well as the fact that she 'doesn't thinks she's any better, like some people do.'

The mother said that both she and the RFP worker made decisions about how things needed to change in the future and what solutions were needed. Some ideas were the RFP worker's not hers but the mother felt that she could say no if the RFP worker suggested her doing something she didn't want to do. The mother also hoped that the family support worker would be a positive role model for John. She described the RFP as 'really helpful' and said that 'nothing could have been any better.' She believed that she was off drugs as a result of RFP support and the support of other services and that she would not have achieved this on own. She also believed that her home environment and her relationship with John were easier as a result of the RFP intervention.



Family D

Background

The family household comprises a mother, father, four sons; Lee, aged 13, Phillip, aged 11, Tim, aged 7, Joe, aged 7 and two daughters; Elisabeth, aged 10 and Jade, aged 1. The family were referred to the RFP at the end of March 2010, by a social worker on the grounds of parenting issues. Lee's behaviour in particular was causing concern as he had been involved in anti-social behaviour and was associating with a negative peer group. Lee was considered to be a child at risk and had been subject to statutory social work intervention. The children had been taken into care previously and were reported to be 'running wild' on the estate.

There were seven recorded police incidents in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention. These included two domestic incidents, concern for safety of child and child missing from home, two breaches of bail conditions and false use of a 999 call (by a small child). There had been 20 housing management complaints about nuisance at the family property and a significant increase in rent arrears levels in the 12 months preceding the RFP intervention. Rechargeable repairs and damage to the property had also been identified.

Progress and Interventions: April 2010 to August 2010

The RFP worker worked closely with the family social worker to avoid duplication and both had clearly defined areas of responsibility. Initially, the RFP worker worked with three of the children in the family in a preventative capacity and had begun to engage with Phillip and Elisabeth. The RFP worker had facilitated their participation in positive activities and had used these as a way to observe the children and to learn about their behaviour, attitudes and how they socialised. The RFP worker had arranged for Phillip to go rock climbing (as he tended to climb out of his bedroom window to abscond) and swimming and had helped him to join a football team. The project worker was considering referring Philip to the Youth Link project. The RFP worker had taken Elisabeth out for a meal to a restaurant and facilitated her starting at Brownies. Accessing services for the family had been an issue and the RFP worker has acted as a broker in terms of facilitating engagement with GPs and more specialist interventions. There were continuing housing management complaints of nuisance at the property and in May 2010 an Acceptable Behaviour Contract was signed between one of the children, his parents, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing and the police.

The RFP worker took the children on a range of activities and trips during the summer holiday.

Progress and Interventions: September 2010 to December 2010

The family were identified as requiring a larger property due to the size of the household and their particular needs. In October the family secured a four-bedroom Rochdale Boroughwide Housing property in Middleton, out of the Heywood area. The RFP worker arranged a furniture package (suite and dining table) from the Salvation Army to assist the family to settle into their new home. The family would now be supported by other agencies outside the New Heart for Heywood New Deal for Communities catchment area and therefore the RFP ended their support. Lee had been referred to the Youth Inclusion Project and a Youth Challenge project.

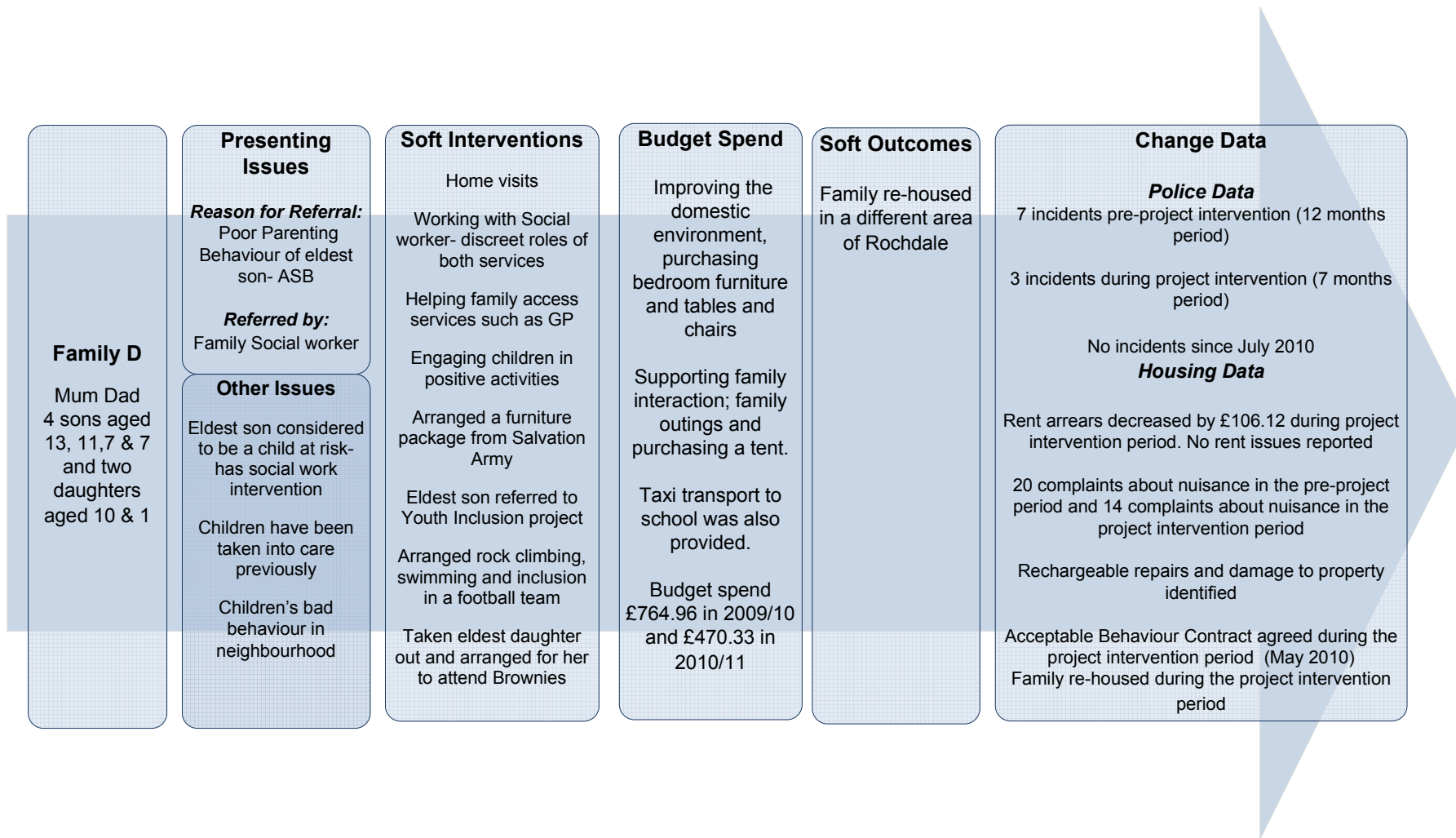
Reflections and Outcomes (at December 2010)

The main item category of expenditure on the family was improving the domestic environment and there was also significant expenditure on supporting family interaction and activities and outcomes. These included purchasing bedroom furniture and tables and chairs. Support for family interaction included family outings and purchasing a tent. Taxi transport to school was also provided. The budget spend on the family was £764.96 in 2009/10 and £470.33 in 2010/11.

In the period during RFP intervention there were three recorded police incidents, including concern for safety of a child, a domestic incident and an abandoned 999 call (by a small child). There have been no recorded incidents since July 2010 (and discounting the abandoned 999 call, since April 2010). However, there were 14 housing management complaints during the RFP intervention period relating to the behaviour of one of the children and an Acceptable Behaviour Contract was drawn up between the child, his parents, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing and the police and signed in May 2010.

The mother believed that the RFP has been helpful in purchasing some furniture, involving the children in positive activities and assisting the family to resettle into their new house. The RFP was only one of the agencies involved and the mother indicated that the decision to have the family re-housed had been promoted by several agencies. She reported that the family were happy in the new house and in term of issues, 'so far so good'. The children

were reported to be doing 'alright.' The mother reported that the children had liked the RFP worker, who had been 'a lot of fun'. She believed that she had needed the support of the RFP and continued to need further support. She stated that the family 'had not been abandoned', as they were still being supported by social services and the children had designated workers supporting them.



Family E

Background

The family household comprises a father, a daughter, Susan, aged 15, a half brother and an uncle who is terminally ill. There is an older sibling who does not live at the same address and who Susan does not have any form of relationship with. Susan's mother had died suddenly in 2007. The family were referred to the RFP in March 2010 by Susan's school on the grounds that she was seen as being very vulnerable due to her mother's death and because she was being bullied.

From January 2010 Susan had stopped attending school. This was thought to be underpinned by a combination of her still needing to come to terms with her mother's death but also due to severe bullying which she had suffered since primary school, linked to her being overweight. According to her teachers, on some occasions Susan had made false allegations of bullying and the RFP worker described her as being paranoid: 'she feels that everyone's starting at her and everyone's talking about her...it's not always the case. It has been in the past.'

After stopping attending school, Susan became more withdrawn, began spending a lot of time in bed and refused to leave the house. At the time of referral to the RFP her father stated that his daughter had always been a happy child and always smiling but that she had stopped smiling and would no longer talk to him or share her problems with him. Susan's father stated that he really wanted some help at the point when the RFP became involved. He explained that without his wife's support he had been 'doing the best I can' but that he had not been coping and was getting depressed with the situation the family were in. He did not know how best to support Susan and encourage her to return to school. He also complained that her school had not been any help in terms of addressing bullying or encouraging Susan to attend. The family home was also in a poor state of repair.

There were no recorded police or housing management incidents in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention. There had been a modest increase in rent arrears levels in the 12 months preceding the RFP intervention, but this was regarded as being manageable.

Progress and Interventions: April 2010 to August 2010

Two RFP workers supported the family, one working with the father and the other with Susan. The RFP worker had contact with Susan twice a week and had attempted to get Susan back into school and to provide her with one to one support to build her confidence. Much of the initial work was simply trying to encourage Susan to get her out of bed. The RFP worker had also accompanied Susan to CAMHS appointments as Susan would not attend these on her own. The RFP worker had encouraged Susan to look after her personal hygiene. Susan was also referred to a counselling service. Her father was provided with emotional support and assistance with financial management. It was reported that a rapport had been established between Susan and the RFP worker very quickly. The RFP worker had shared make-up with Susan and had taken her shopping for new clothes. Susan was taking greater care of her personal hygiene and appearance.

The RFP worker has liaised with Susan's teachers to develop a phased return to school, which she was described as being 'terrified off.' It was decided that Susan would attend school for two hours each day and could do anything she wanted when she was there (e.g. cooking, using the internet or chatting to teachers) simply as a way to make her feel comfortable being within the school environment again. This had been very successful: Susan had been attending school enjoying it and reported that she was happier having a routine. She also became independent and attended school without the RFP worker. However there was a concern about how Susan would be affected by the schools merger and before the summer holidays, Susan had found the move to the new secondary school very difficult and began to not attend. Susan had attended a CAMHS appointment in July.

The RFP worker wanted to focus the next phases of the intervention on further building Susan's confidence and independence so that she would get up and attend school without her father's assistance. The RFP worker also wanted to ensure that Susan to engage with the mainstream curriculum and gained the qualifications and that she developed an appropriate social network.

Progress and Interventions: September 2010 to December 2010

One of the RFP workers continued to spend a lot of time with the family. A key priority was having Susan's uncle re-housed, as he spent all his time on the sofa in the living room and Susan was uncomfortable with him being there. The RFP worker liaised with Macmillan and other care organisations to find him suitable accommodation.

The RFP accessed a place for Susan at an alternative education centre for young people with special educational needs. Susan however refused to attend despite the RFP worker putting everything in place to make attending easy (e.g. providing an alarm clock, giving her father a timetable of when to take Susan's laptop off her the evening before school and when to get her up in morning). The RFP worker had visited in the mornings to get Susan to the centre school but she had refused. The RFP worker had encouraged Susan's father to clean up the house and the Education Welfare Officer reported the state of the property to the council.

Contact between the RFP workers and the family continued to be pretty regular. There had been a lot of crisis management and RFP worker felt that the problems with this family were very deeply entrenched and even small changes were significant.

In October, the RFP worker secured £80 to take Susan shopping in Manchester for the day to buy clothes, toiletries etc as a treat since this is something that nobody had ever done for her. Susan stated that it had been the best day of her life and that the RFP worker was like the sister she never had. The RFP worker said that Susan was always smiley and positive when she saw her and that her confidence seemed to have really improved. Alternative accommodation had been secured for Susan's uncle and the RFP worker had arranged to help the family redecorate the living room to make it a family space. There continued to be a focus on crisis management and periods of set backs. A further CAMHS appointment for Susan was not available until December and this was regarded as potentially stalling progress in addressing underlying needs.

According to her father, Susan continued to have '*ups and downs*' and '*good and bad days*.' He acknowledged that progress with his daughter would be slow and ongoing but felt that significant strides had been made. Susan's school attendance (on a part-time basis) had improved and, although she was sometimes late for school, the school had been supportive and flexible about this. She was undertaking vocational training in childcare which she engaged positively and proactively with. Susan was also attending an after school club, which she enjoyed and she had participated in a leisure outing.

By December, Susan's father described their circumstances as 'better than they were.' Susan's school attendance was reported to be over 95 per cent, although she was still late on occasions. Susan was seeing a counsellor at school and an RFP-provided counsellor, both of whom were helping her to address her bereavement and other issues. The RFP had also arranged for an adult care worker to provide support to Susan's father.

Reflections and Outcomes (at December 2010)

The main item category of expenditure on the family was improving the domestic environment. This included the purchase of bedroom furniture, bedding, a carpet, decorating equipment, handy man costs to put up a cupboard and the removal of a fridge. School uniforms and gym shoes were also purchased. The budget spend on the family was £0 in 2009/10 and £466.44 in 2010/11.

There were no recorded police or housing management incidents in during the RFP intervention period (there had been no recorded incidents in the 12 months preceding the intervention). The family rent account was in credit.

The RFP worker believed that, as a young female, she had been able to establish a good rapport with Susan and that she was providing the only adult female presence in Susan's life since her mother's death. Susan also believed that the RFP worker being a young female had been important.

Susan's father was extremely positive about the support he had received from the RFP worker. He described her as 'like sunshine walking through the door.' He was impressed by how much the RFP offered the family both in terms of their time but also material help such paying for Susan's room to be decorated. Dad said that he *'couldn't say a bad word about the project.'* Susan stated that said that she wouldn't have gone back to school if the RFP worker had not been helping her.

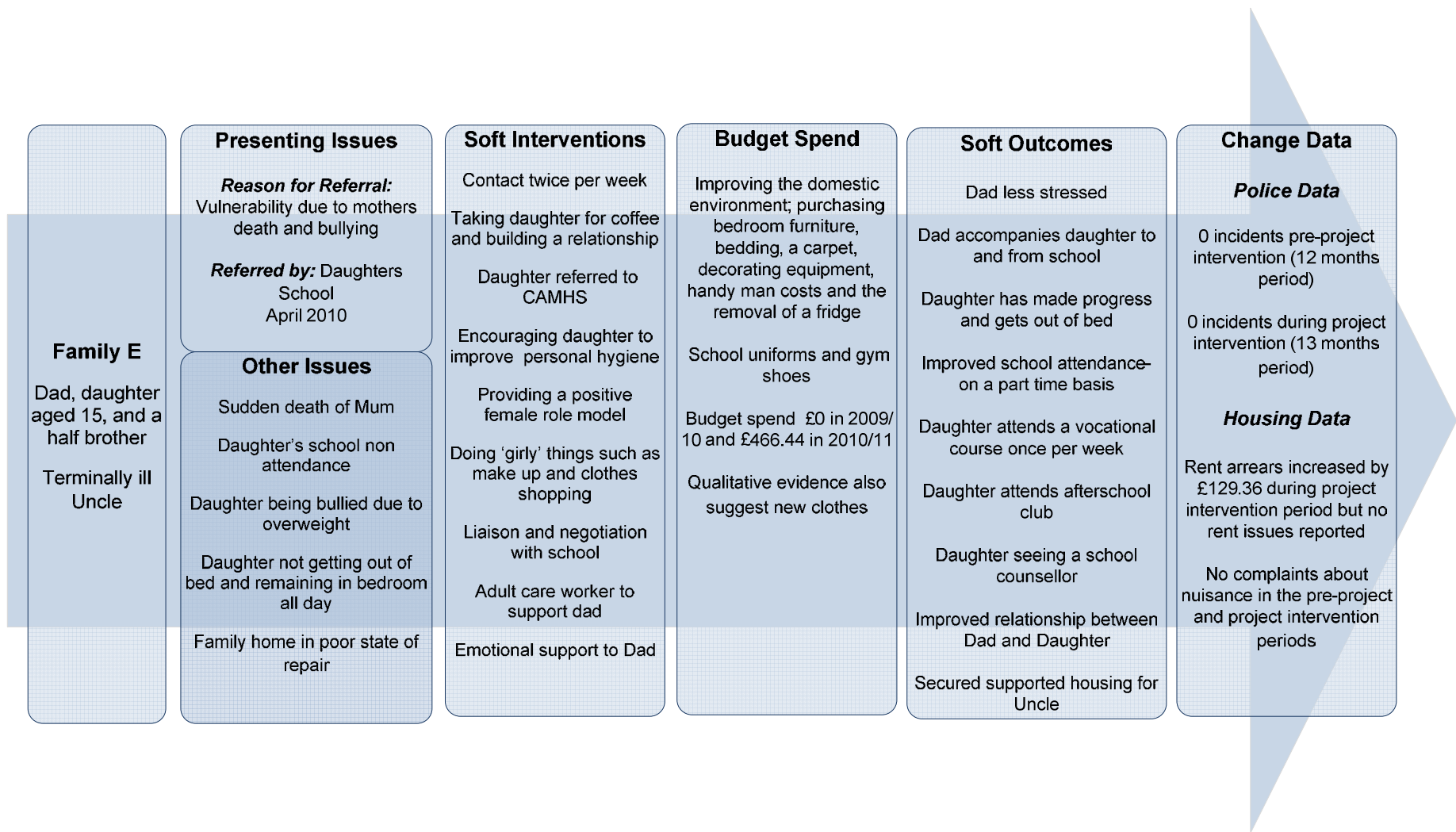
Susan's father explained that the RFP worker had helped access counselling through CAMHS for his daughter and had provided comfort and reassurance to Susan, who found the session difficult. He believed that things had got better and reiterated that the RFP worker has explained that progress may be slow. He stated 'if I go back eleven months it was like climbing a mountain.' He 'was very grateful for what they've [the RFP workers] done', as 'if it wasn't for the [RFP workers] I'd have landed up in prison...I wasn't getting anywhere [with Susan], I was at rock bottom.' He believed the RFP had been 'invaluable' and stated that he was 'less stressed' and had been 'sleeping a lot better.'

Susan's father also reported that the RFP worker had been instrumental in liaising with school. He now felt more confident in contacting school. His daughter was reported to be doing well at school and enjoying it. Susan's father felt that if he needed to support the RFP worker was easy to get hold of and would respond quickly. He believed that the RFP workers were 'what's been missing.' He acknowledged the generation gap between himself

(aged 70) and Susan (aged 15) but believed that since the RFP involvement, Susan has been more communicative with him. In January 'it was like a war between us', but now things were more positive and 'we are closing the gap.'

The RFP worker believed that access to personalised budgets had enabled her to secure the family's engagement and meet their needs:

"With [Susan] it gives me the chance to take her out [shopping] on her own, she gets one to one time on her own with somebody that she enjoys spending time with and it cheers her up because she's getting something that she likes because she's never treated. It boosts her confidence a little bit because she's got something to wear that her friends are wearing. It's not going to cost us a lot but it's made a big difference to her week."



Family F

Background

The family household comprises a mother, her partner, her son, Steven aged 4 and her daughter, Charlotte, aged 3. The family had been referred to the RFP at the end of March 2010. There were attachment issues between the mother and her daughter, who spent 12 months living with a grandparent. There were no known problems between the mother and Steven and the mother was reported to be effective at disciplining and routines. The family had been involved with a range of service providers and the mother was attending CAMHS and cognitive behaviour therapy. The mother had recently undergone an operation and this had a negative effect on her emotional well being. The mother's partner had been off work due to an injury and had separated for a short period from the mother and the children. The mother aspired to complete the degree studies that she started before she had children. It was not possible to access police data for this family. There were no housing management issues and rent arrears levels had reduced by around £250 to a negligible sum in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention.

Progress and Interventions: September 2010 to December 2010

The mother was reported by RFP workers to be good to work with and that she tried to take on board the RFP workers' advice and strategies. Steven had started infant school and was reported to be doing well. He had attended an after school club but had not settled in this activity so his mother was now supporting him by attending the club. Charlotte attended nursery for 15 hours per week, every morning.

The mother's partner had returned to the family home and the RFP worker reported that he communicated well with the mother and the children. He was also back in full time employment. The RFP worker worked to coordinate his work commitments with the mother's planning and this was viewed as being effective.

The RFP worker assisted the mother to put the children to bed when her partner was working in the evenings, usually two or three times per week. However, the mother was struggling with Charlotte who would not settle. The RFP worker had made suggestions about keeping to a routine and persevering with Charlotte and showing some discipline. The mother welcomed 'the extra pair of hands' and explained that she felt less stressed about bed times and felt that she gained strength from the RFP worker's presence. She also

welcomed the suggestions from the RFP worker and valued her thoughts and ideas, which she found useful and tried to act upon. The RFP worker reported that the mother had thrived on this intense support and that the children were in a more stable routine.

The RFP worker had been instrumental in helping the mother to participate in Sure Start. Previously, she had been struggling to participate with two children but felt much more able to do so since she only had Charlotte with her in the afternoons. The RFP worker was also assertive in ensuring that the mother went out to the park and other places. The mother explained that she felt much better for doing so but was unable to motivate herself, although she regretted this.

The RFP worker had suggested to the mother that she get involved in voluntary work, as she had helped out at her friend's shop occasionally and she had coped well with this. The RFP worker was attempting to register the mother as a volunteer. The mother welcomed this as she felt that she 'needed to get out of the house' and believed that the RFP worker 'talked sense into me.' However, the mother was also keen to move away from the neighbourhood.

In October, the mother reported that bed times had been particularly challenging and that she had found it very difficult to cope with Charlotte screaming and coming down after being put to bed. The RFP worker has been helping with this, by looking after Steven while the mother attended to Charlotte, and also being there to reinforce the management of Charlotte's behaviour and putting her back to bed. This had proved to be effective and the mother had subsequently managed to take on this routine herself.

The RFP worker used positive reinforcement to try and help the mother to see that she did care for Charlotte, for example by accompanying them to the park and observing other parents and their interaction with their children. The RFP worker also highlighted all the positive things the mother did with Charlotte, such as putting her on the play equipment and staying with her to make sure that she was alright. The RFP worker believed that these strategies had worked well. The RFP worker was keen that the mother attended a Well Women group but had been unsuccessful in her attempts to encourage her to participate in the group.

In November, the mother reported that 'everything's great.' The RFP worker had encouraged her to undertake training as a Home Start volunteer. She was happy to do so but was less confident about actually being able to be a volunteer and was uncertain that she was 'in a good enough place' yet. She appreciated that the RFP worker was thinking 'what's best for me', as it would be easy for the RFP worker to 'sit back and go "alright".' She had attended a relaxation course, facilitated and funded by the RFP, which had involved working through

assertiveness, anger management and other activities and then all participants received a massage at the end of the course as a reward. To enable the mother to attend this course, the RFP worker took Charlotte out in the afternoon. The mother reported that this had been a big help and thought that the RFP worker had 'gone out of her way' to ensure she could attend the course.

However, the mother still believed that she was 'failing miserably' at the bedtime routine. The RFP worker intended to visit the family every night at bed time to help with the routine for Charlotte. However, the RFP worker had not been able to attend as much as the mother would have liked. She explained that it was important that someone had actually witnessed her daughter's bedtime behaviour and reassured her that they believed her: 'the biggest thing for me is that she [the RFP worker] has seen that.' She valued the fact that the RFP worker sat with her at bed times and observed that she was trying to stick to the routine and that Charlotte was just screaming: 'it's not so much getting help with it, it's getting believed with it.' She was concerned that CAMHS workers did not visit at night and therefore did not witness Charlotte's behaviour. She valued the presence of the RFP worker as someone who could say 'do you know what? You're not imagining it, it's not over reacting, it is happening.'

As the health visitors were no longer involved with the family, the mother appreciated the RFP worker as someone to 'fall back on' and 'It's about having someone sat with you to bring the levels right down.'

The mother had booked places on some courses to facilitate her return to education and the RFP worker had offered to take and collect Steven to enable her to attend the courses. The RFP worker helped to get a mattress for Charlotte's bed. Her mother said that this help had 'upped her confidence in the project worker just that bit more' as other agencies had been promising a mattress for a long time. She communicated with the RFP worker primarily by text, which she preferred and stated that the RFP worker always responded 'straight away.'

In December there had been little contact between the RFP worker and the family as the partner was reluctant to answer the phone. However, there had been no pressing issues within the family and they had received some contact and support from the CAMHS worker. The mother contrasted the role of the RFP and CAMHS workers and suggested that although the CAMHS worker's more formal approach was supportive, she preferred the 'down to earth' approach of the RFP worker as someone who she perceived to be 'not just paid to listen to me.'

The mother was still struggling with the bed time routine and Charlotte was becoming more problematic. She believed that she was not making progress. However, the CAMHS worker

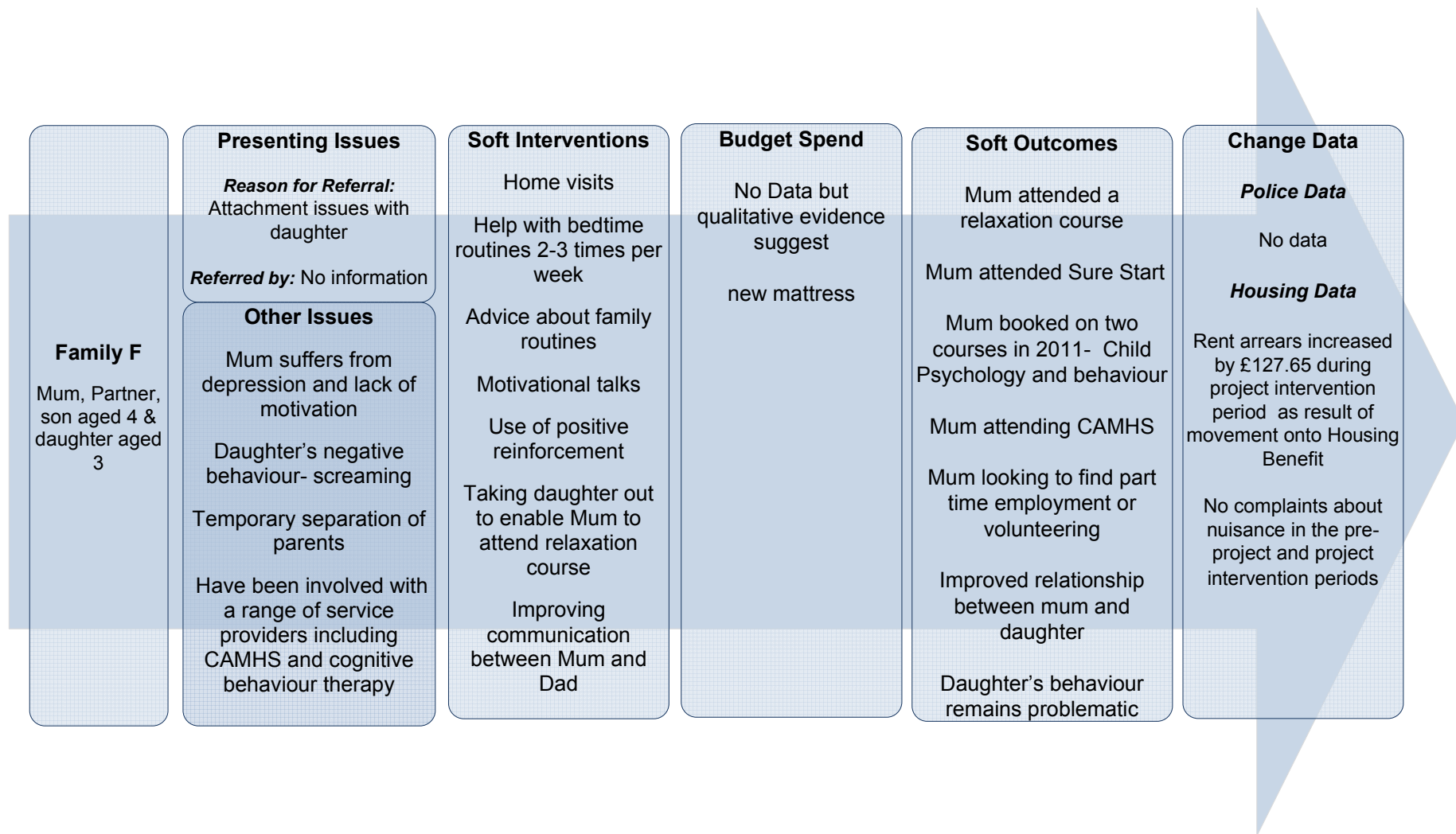
had reassured her that she was doing well. She was keen to be involved in the Home Start volunteering but had missed a session. She had secured a place on a college course on child psychology and behaviour through Life Long Learning support, beginning in January 2011. Her ambition was to become a child psychologist specialising in post natal attachment and bonding. She also wanted to return to part-time work when Charlotte started school in September 2011. She viewed work as a potential solution to some of her mental health difficulties and explained that at present she felt 'like a spare part' and had 'no purpose.'

Reflections and Outcomes (at December 2010)

No personalised budget expenditure or police incidents data was provided for this family. There were no housing management incidents reported during the RFP intervention (none had been reported in the period preceding the intervention). Rent arrears had increased slightly as a result of movement onto Housing Benefit, but this was viewed as manageable.

The mother believed that she could speak to the RFP worker honestly and that the worker was willing to listen to her and understand her situation. She valued that fact that the RFP worker was 'not clinical at all' and did not come in and say 'where's my note book and tell me what's been going on.' She noted that this approach was very different to that of the CAMHS workers or health visitors. The mother positively viewed the RFP worker as providing 'a kick up the arse' which she believed that she needed and that the RFP worker had 'made me think and challenges me.' She welcomed the RFP worker's assertive approach, for example 'making her' go out and participate in activities with the children.

She believed that the RFP had made a difference and that it had 'restored my confidence in services.' She would 'miss' the RFP worker as 'someone to rant at legitimately' and the worker's 'casual but formal' approach which was 'the best of both worlds.' She also believed that, despite her initial reservations, it was advantageous that one of the RFP workers lived on the same estate. She believed that the RFP worker had the necessary skills and was able to contact other agencies. She had been reassured about her parenting skills and offered both a realistic perspective and practical support.



Family G

Background

The family household comprised a father and his daughter, Gill aged 16. Her mother died in December 2009. An older sibling lived elsewhere. Gill had previously lived with her mother, but following her mother's death her father Dad stepped in to support Gill. The family were referred to the RFP in September 2009. There had been five recorded police incidents in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention. These included rowdy behaviour, domestic assault and two missing from home reports. Rent arrears had increased in the 12 months preceding the intervention, but were manageable and there had been no recorded housing management incidents.

Progress and Interventions: October 2009 to August 2010

According to the RFP worker, although initially Gill and her father had struggled to come to terms with the sudden transition following the death of Gill's mother, they have developed a positive bond between them. The father had moved to a new city and was in a same sex relationship which had created some tensions between himself and Gill. There were also issues about his son's criminal activity. The RFP worker had supported Gill following the death of her mother and assisted with the funeral arrangements. The family had been supported by the Children and Family Support Team to resettle in their new home area and the father had been assisted in settling Gill into his home. The RFP worker had assumed a mediation role between Gill and her father during this transition and relocation.

Gill also worked well with the Children and Family Support Team and received support to access home schooling that had enabled her to sit two GCSEs and to develop a positive relationship with her father. Gill has secured a place on a college hairdressing course to begin in September 2010. Although Gill has moved out of the area she still used the Children and Family Support Team service to support her to attend Well Women appointments and had begun to address issues around her bereavement. It was agreed that Gill could continue to see her doctor in Rochdale until the end of the RFP. Gill's father had accessed a Skills 4 U programme in Heywood and was subsequently keen to return to education.

Progress and Interventions: September 2010 to December 2010

Although Gill now lived in another city, the RFP worker continued to see her three or four times a month and her father had requested that the RFP continue to keep in contact with Gill. There had been no counselling support provided as Gill did not meet the threshold for this or any other services. The project has sought to get support through Connexions for Gill to attend college, but as the RFP worker stated 'There isn't a service for a 16 year old walking about with her mum's ashes.' The RFP worker also believed that there had been a lack of coordination amongst services: 'There were 14 professionals in the family living room and Gill didn't know any of them.'

Gill was attending her hairdressing course at college and she went on a family holiday with her father. This was viewed as being extremely positive as the relationship between Gill and her father had previously been regarded as 'partly non existent.' The RFP worker assisted Gill to secure a plot at a cemetery where she would be able to visit and bereavement counselling by one of the pool of specialists funded by the RFP will be part of the exit strategy for the family. Further support would also be offered to Gill including providing her with equipment required for her college course, assisting her in accessing a part-time job, referral to a Youth Inclusion Project and liaison with Connexions to monitor her progress through college.

Reflections and Outcomes (at December 2010)

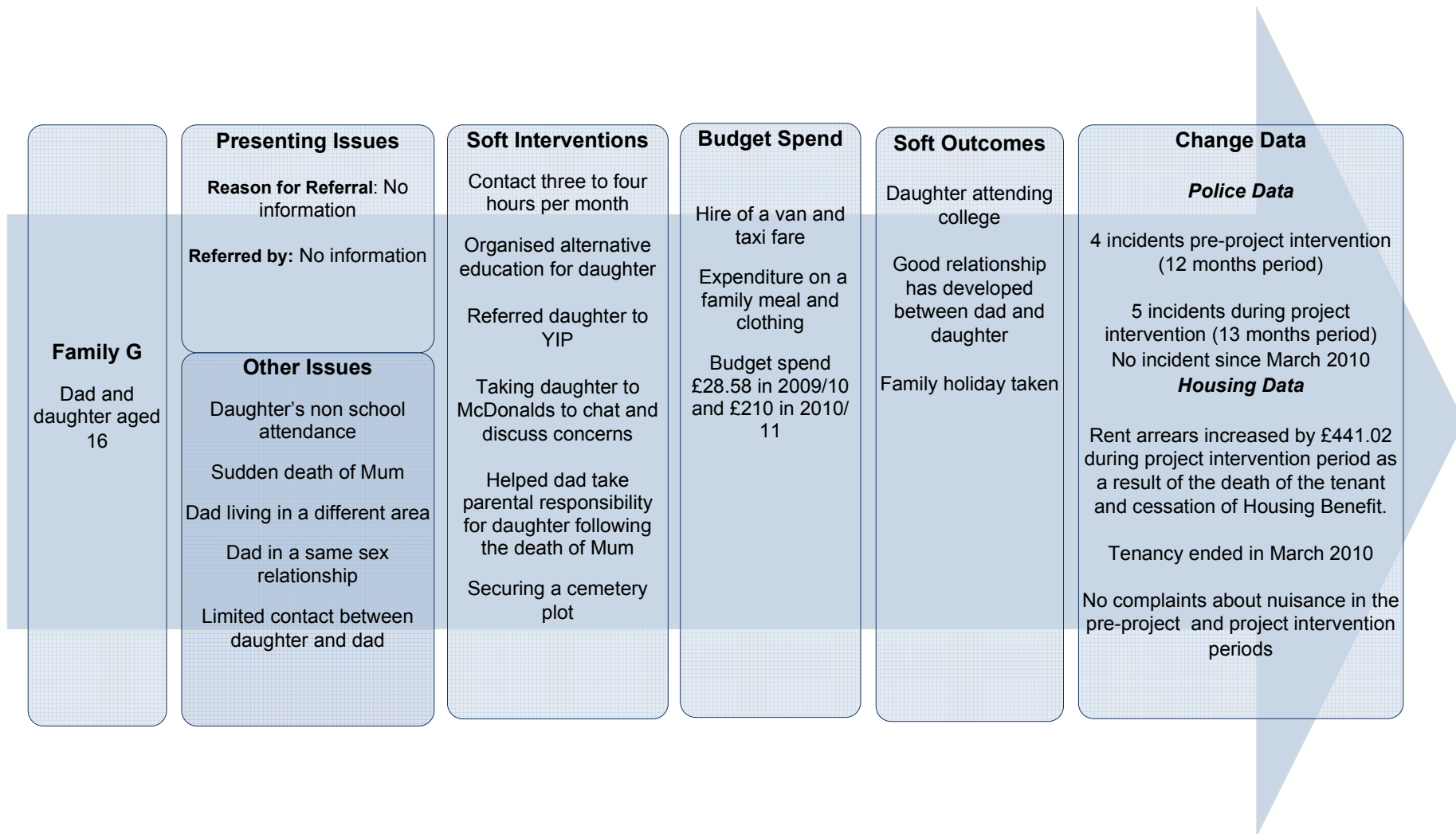
The main item category of expenditure on the family was transport (the hire of a van and taxi fare). There was also expenditure on a family meal and clothing. The budget spend on the family was £28.58 in 2009/10 and £210 in 2010/11.

In the period during the RFP intervention there were five recorded police incidents. One related to the sudden death in the family and three of the others related to the family as victims of criminal damage, burglary and suspicious circumstances/ a prowler. One incident related to a domestic incident linked to theft of internal household property. There were no housing management incidents during the RFP intervention period (there had been no incidents in the 12 months prior to the intervention). Rent arrears had increased by £441.02 during the intervention period as a result of the death of the named tenant and cessation of Housing Benefit. The tenancy ended in March 2010.

Gill stated that the RFP worker had been a big help:

"Before I met [the RFP worker] I was going out a lot at night, not telling my mum and dad where I was. Now I realise that I have to tell them, and that I need to be careful about going out. [The RFP worker] used to pick me up and take me to McDonalds etc. and we would just talk things through."

"[The RFP worker] helped me a lot, she made me think about things and realise things, about what I should be doing and not doing. It also helped me when I moved to [new city]... I think the project has been a good thing. It's helped me a lot."



Family H

Background

The family household comprises a mother, her partner and four children: Stuart, aged 14, Claire, aged 11, Holly, aged 6 and Caroline, aged 2. The family were referred to the RFP in March 2009 by Stuart's school due to his behavioural problems (his attendance at school was not an issue). There were also concerns about Claire and Holly. There had been one recorded police incident in the 12 months preceding the RFP intervention, relating to rowdy behaviour. Two RFP workers were assigned to the family, respectively working with the parents and Stuart and subsequently also supporting Claire.

The family moved to Heywood from another city in 2008. They were still trying to come to terms with the suicide of the children's father. The mother suffers from depression and had previously taken an overdose, which had also impacted significantly on the emotional wellbeing of the children. One of the children had been sexually abused and this abuse had also been witnessed by another child. The mother suffers from other serious medical conditions and is required to attend hospital regularly. Stuart and Claire help care for their mother and were supported by Young Carers, including receiving training on how to manage and respond to their mother's medical conditions.

Stuart had emotional and behavioural difficulties which were manifested through anger management problems and self-harming. These are related to the trauma of his father's death, the abuse he witnessed, his mother's difficulties and a problematic relationship with his mother's partner. When referred, Stuart's behaviour was a concern both at school and at home where his mother stated he would 'smash his room up and everyone gets the height of abuse off him.'

Claire was described by the RFP worker as 'having an adult head on her shoulders' due to the caring responsibilities she undertakes for her mother, and the associated concern and worry that she has for her mother's health, which meant that she was reluctant to leave her mother at any time. Although RFP workers were aware that Claire had been abused, she did not discuss this and it was not apparent if she could recall the abuse. Claire had also not been attending school for some time, complaining of poor physical health, although she did resume part-time schooling from April 2010. Medical examinations found no evidence of physical conditions and her GP concluded that the problem was psychosomatic, as an RFP worker explained:

"She's constantly complaining of pain in her body, really emotional, not wanting to go to school. We can't really understand why...When I first met her for an hour she didn't stop crying and complaining of being in pain, but they've constantly been going to A and E, constantly been going to the GP and they can't tell us what's wrong with her."

Claire's mother continued to claim that Claire had a very serious physical medical condition. Claire was reluctant to discuss any of her fears and issues with her mother. Claire had established a positive relationship with her mother's new partner. Holly suffered from conditions including asthma, sleep seizures and enuresis.

Progress and Interventions: April 2010 to June 2010

The RFP referred Stuart and Claire to CAMHS. Claire was also referred to the HYPE project, which is a counselling and advice service for young people. Although the RFP worker had established a good relationship with Claire, she was still trying to understand the root causes of Claire's complaints about her health.

The RFP worker had supported Claire's phased return to schooling by collecting her from school, followed by a one to one session which Claire's mother described as being very helpful. Claire began attending school regularly and seemed settled and the RFP worker reduced the level of contact with her. However, Claire once again stopped attending. The reason for this was unclear as Claire was described as having lots of friends and doing well academically. The RFP worker stated 'we are still getting the bottom of this...there's something underlying it that we're not getting down to.' The RFP worker believed that Claire may be missing her friends in the city where she used to live and whom she continued to visit occasionally. Claire's complaints about her health had reduced. The RFP worker continued to facilitate Claire's attendance at the HYPE project and believed that some progress was being made, although there were no plans to withdraw RFP support and the mother was anxious that this support should be continued.

Progress and Interventions: July 2010 to December 2010

Stuart had become more settled, he was attending school and there were no reported issues with his behaviour. He continued to receive support from the young carer worker and had attended all of his CAMHS appointments, although they had ended. The RFP workers devised an agreement with Stuart and the family, including getting up on time for school (the

RFP provided an alarm clock), turning off his computer at a certain time, not responding with angry outbursts and taking some responsibility for his behaviour.

Claire had been attending school and her complaints about her physical ailments had ceased although she still became upset regularly. The RFP worker continued to spend one to one time with Claire and took her out for meals. The RFP worker had some concerns about Caroline's health and her sporadic attendance at the Sure Start crèche which the RFP had arranged for her. The RFP worker was liaising with Sure Start staff to monitor Caroline's progress. The RFP worker continued to visit the family and provide emotional support to the mother and acted as an informal mediator to resolve family disputes, although the mother's partner refused to consider formal family therapy. The RFP worker had registered the family with a dentist and accompanied the mother to medical appointments. The RFP worker also liaised with the Council to have the family re-housed as the size and layout of the home was not suitable and the RFP worker had managed to arrange for the landlord to undertake some required repairs. The RFP had purchased bunk beds, a fridge freezer, bedding and a mattress protector.

Claire had temporarily moved to her grandmother's home as she refused to share a room. The mother was still struggling to assert herself with the children. The young carer project had referred her to a parenting course.

In September Stuart's behaviour at school had deteriorated significantly. His mother believed that this had been triggered by the move to the new school with new teachers, new rules, larger class sizes and without the strategies to manage Stuart's behaviour that had been agreed in his previous school. However, the RFP worker believed that the root of the behavioural problems was primarily Stuart's difficult relationship with his mother's partner. Stuart had been re-referred to CAMHS and the CAMHS worker was liaising with the school about managing his behaviour. Claire was attending school but was not happy there. The RFP workers' contact with the family had become more irregular, although they continued to spend one to one time with Stuart and Claire. This was a deliberate attempt to prepare the family for exiting the project.

By November Stuart's behaviour remained inconsistent and he was still unsettled in school. However, he was engaging positively with his CAMHS worker and a new youth worker who had been assigned to him. The parenting in the home continued to be inconsistent and the demands on the children were not always appropriate for their age. Relations between family members continued to be fractious and difficult. Claire was attending school without any problems. A nurse was now supporting Caroline. The RFP worker had arranged counselling

for the mother and accompanied her to the sessions and had referred the mother to a wellbeing group.

Reflections and Outcomes (at December 2010)

The main item category of expenditure on the family was improving the domestic environment. This included the purchase of a fridge/freezer, bunk beds, bedding, a mattress and mattress protector and an alarm clock. There was also expenditure on activities and outcomes and support with a food bill. The budget spend on the family was £467.47 in 2009/10 and £73.05 in 2010/11. There was one recorded police incident during the RFP intervention period, in October 2010, relating to concern for the safety of a child.

The RFP workers characterised this case as having a focus on crisis management whilst attempting to understand and address underlying issues. The RFP workers recognised that there were still a number of deep rooted issues from the past that needed to be addressed with Stuart and Claire. The RFP was developing an exit strategy for the family, who would still need support. There were a range of agencies and organisations that would remain involved and the RFP worker hoped that counselling and participation in the wellbeing group would begin to equip the mother with the confidence and skills to cope without the help of the RFP. The RFP worker believed that a positive relationship had been established with the family and that they had engaged robustly.

The mother identified the importance of the RFP being differentiated from previous social services interventions:

"I didn't know what it was at first, I thought are they sending social services or is something wrong? When they came out and explained everything and said they're just there to help me and if Stuart needed anyone to talk to, it was all right then. I was just a bit scared at first."

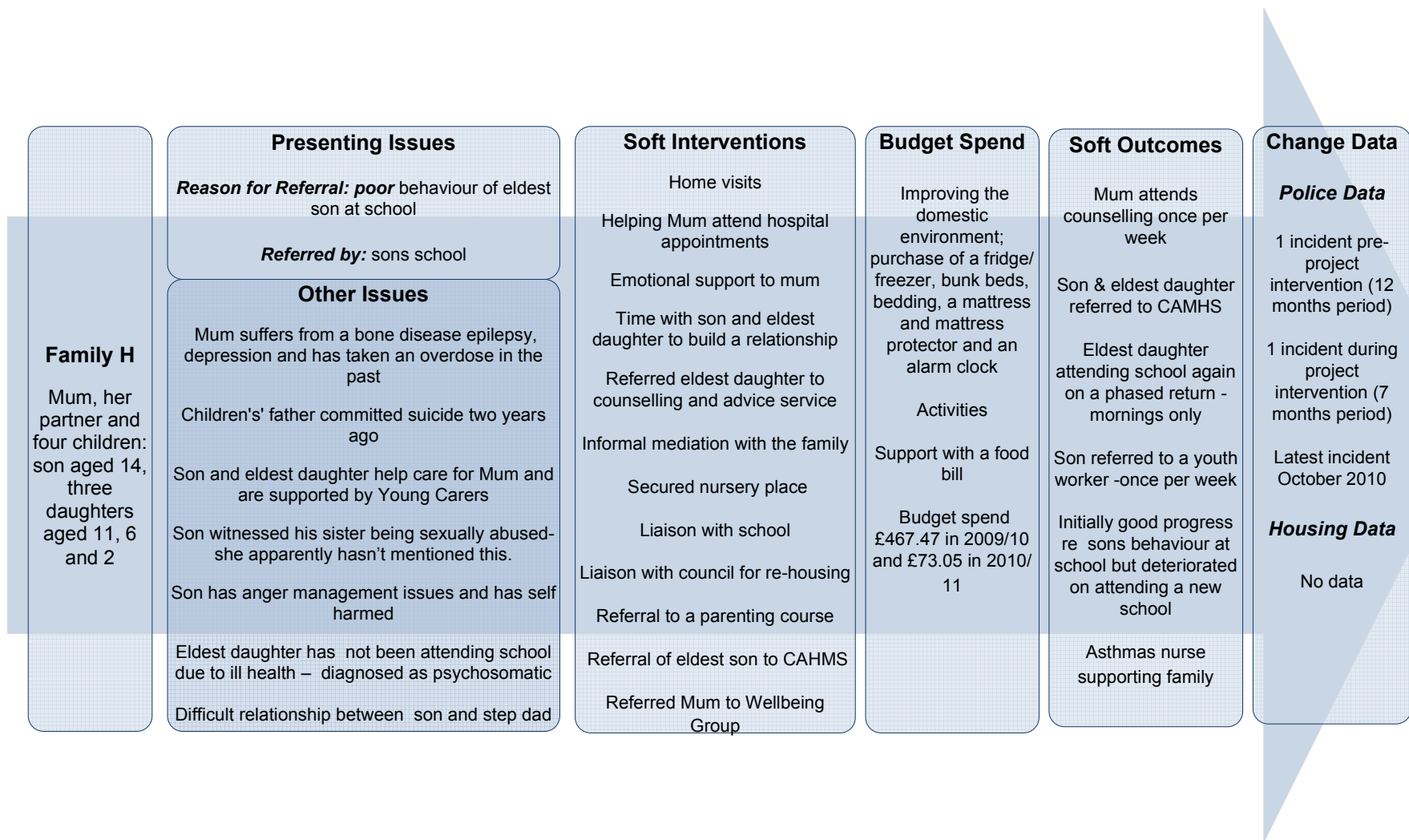
She explained what she had hoped to achieve from the intervention:

"It was just the fact that there would be someone there who he could talk to and to let me know what I could do next with him [Stuart] because I didn't know where to go."

The mother reported finding the RFP very useful. The most important thing for her was having somebody at the end of the phone when she needed them and someone to provide her with reassurance: 'I know if I text [the RFP worker] and ask her something she'll always phone me.' She particularly valued the emotional support from the RFP worker, who she

said always listened to her and never pressured her into doing anything she didn't want to do but rather let her drive the decisions. The RFP worker was described as being 'easy-going' and 'non-judgemental.'

She also valued the practical help provided by the RFP as previously she had been unable to attend hospital appointments. She also believed that Stuart had made progress and was 'totally different', which she attributed to his contact with a CAMHS counsellor. She said that they family had been waiting for two years for an appointment but once the RFP worker became involved she secured a referral for Stuart very quickly. She found the counselling sessions she was attending very useful. She stated that her family were 'all getting on better with each other,' the children were more settled in school and at home and that she was getting out of the house more and that the family were 'all a lot happier.' She was concerned about the RFP ending as she had established trust with the workers and believed that this was very important and would need to be rebuilt with other agency workers.



Family I

Background

The family household comprises a mother, father, three daughters: Paula aged 15, Harriet, aged 12 and Tracey aged 2; and two sons: George, aged 10 and David, aged 9. Paula had a different biological father. Another child, Tom, aged 14, was also living with the family as the result of a voluntary foster placement. The family were referred to the RFP by a social worker in January 2010. There had been three recorded police incidents in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention, two of which related to the family as victims (proowler/suspicious circumstances and malicious communications) and one of lost property. The family had been subject to a Suspended Possession Order in July 2006 but there had been no housing management issues in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention and rent arrears were limited and manageable.

The family home was overcrowded and the mother was described as having anxiety issues. Tom had ADHD, adding to the already complex circumstances of the family. There was particular concern about Paula's involvement in anti-social behaviour and criminal activity and her non-attendance at school.

Progress and Interventions: January 2010 to August 2010

Paula claimed that she was not attending school due to the lack of a school uniform; the RFP purchased a uniform for her and she began attending school. Harriet had communication difficulties at school and the RFP referred her to CAMHS. George had a statement of special educational needs and required support at school. The RFP also referred him to CAMHS. The RFP workers identified attachment issues between the mother and her youngest daughter, Tracey and attempted to address these. The mother refused to accept financial assistance from the RFP and the RFP worker had to spend a long time building up trust with her, which involved sitting with her for a couple of hours, having a cup of tea and listening. The RFP worker lived in the area and knew the mother in a personal capacity prior to the RFP intervention. The mother liked to see the RFP workers a lot and relied upon them for emotional support. The RFP worker commented that whilst 'on paper' it appeared that the RFP 'wasn't doing much' she had a clear rationale about why these informal conversations with the mother were important and how they would underpin future work with the family. Conditions in the home had been improved and maintained. The father was reported to have low self-esteem and motivation but he had made considerable

progress through taking cooking, computer and other skills courses facilitated by the RFP. The RFP worker had also secured and funded a place for Tracey at a private nursery near to the other children's schools.

Progress and Interventions: September 2010 to December 2010

The mother reported that, although the RFP worker was 'brilliant', she perceived that the worker was spending less time with her than with other families (she lived directly opposite another family involved with the RFP). She was resentful of this and although she recognised the heavy case load of the RFP workers, she believed that she was receiving less intensive support because the RFP worker knew that she would not harm her children and other family cases might be more pressing. She did feel that she could 'let off steam' and be honest with the RFP worker, in contrast to other agency workers where she felt under pressure to ensure that 'everything is perfect.' She believed that she was being watched all the time by other agency workers but was being offered little in the form of support, although she recognised that she needed help with her children, particularly the teenagers. She felt very let down by the support from social services and the police regarding her foster child Tom. She believed that she did her best and placed great value on the fact that the house was always clean and the children were always clean and fed. However, she perceived that things were being taken out of her control and she felt overwhelmed by all the agency involvement with the family, which resulted in her putting more pressure on herself, increasing her depression and anxiety and further reducing her ability to cope. The RFP worker had suggested that the mother attend parenting classes. The mother believed that she would benefit from this but was concerned about attending as she suffered from anxiety and panic attacks and did not like crowds. In October the mother attended a Well Women group and family therapy sessions delivered by an RFP-funded counsellor. The RFP worker described this as a big step forward, given the mother's agoraphobia and paranoia.

The father was also engaging well, had completed a Skills 4 U course, had attained levels 1-3 of a computing course and had attended a 6-week cookery course. However, Tom's behaviour continued to be problematic and he had been in trouble with the police. The RFP worker was concerned that the mother's attention had been distracted from her own children by this and that her parenting had suffered as a result. Paula had moved out of the family home to live with her grandmother and communication with her grandmother had broken down completely. The RFP worker managed to get Paula and her mother to sit together and say five positive things about each other. After much discussion and screaming and shouting,

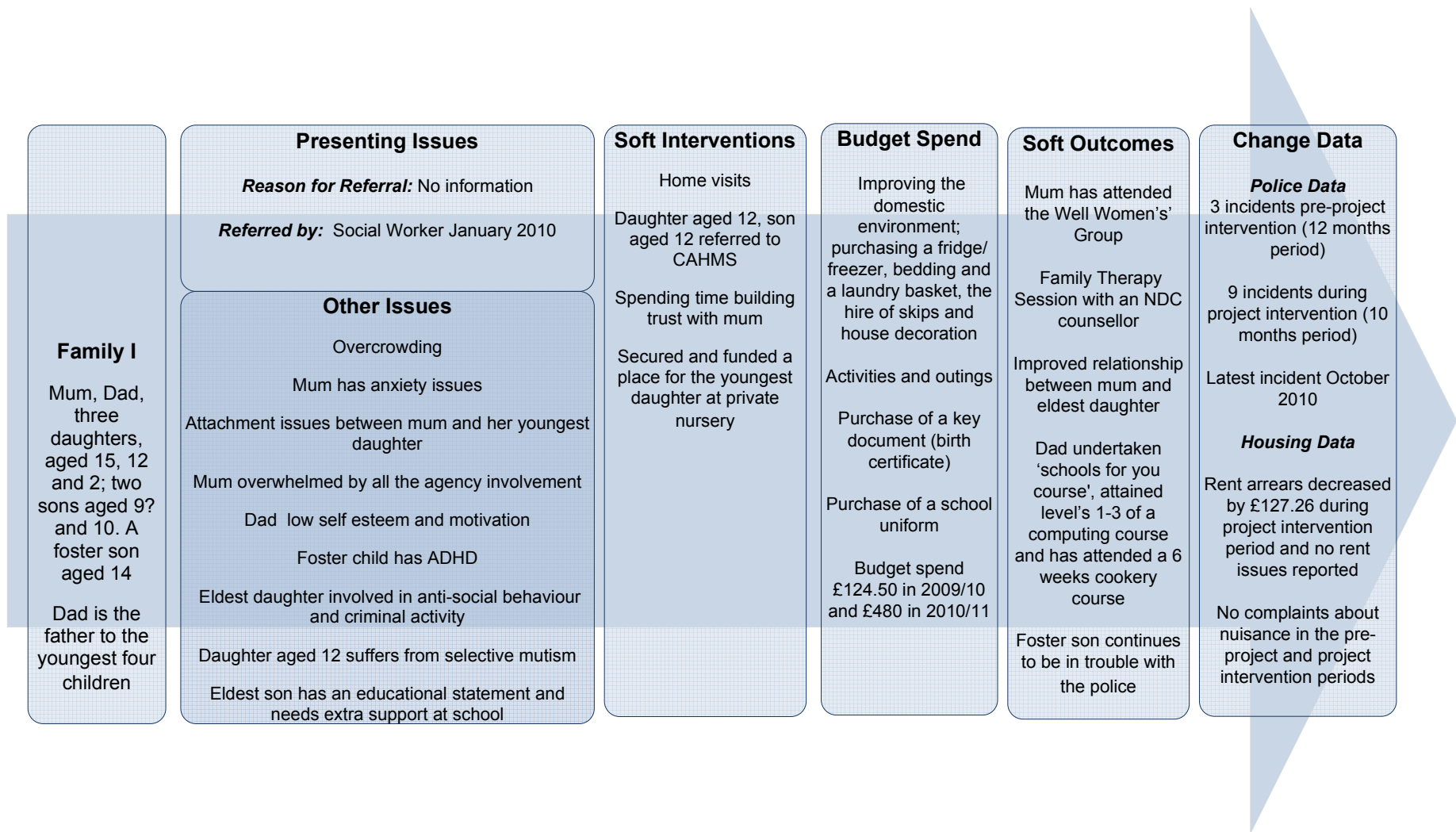
both mother and daughter were able to give each other a hug and say some positive things about each other. Paula moved back into the family home.

Reflections and Outcomes (at December 2010)

The main item category of expenditure on the family was improving the domestic environment. This included the purchase of a fridge/freezer, bedding and a laundry basket, the hire of skips and house decoration. There was also expenditure on activities and outings and the purchase of a key document (birth certificate). The budget spend on the family was £124.50 in 2009/10 and £480 in 2010/11.

There were nine recorded police incidents in the period during RFP intervention (compared to three in the 12 months preceding the intervention). The incidents included a racially motivated assault/public order, breach of bail conditions, missing from home, concern for safety of child and three domestic incidents. In addition, there were two cases relating to the family as victims, including threats of violence and malicious communications. The latest incident was recorded in October 2010. There were no housing management issues during the RFP intervention period (there had not been any prior to the intervention) and rent arrears had been further reduced to a negligible sum.

The mother reported that the RFP worker had 'been brilliant.' She spoke positively about the fact that the RFP worker 'doesn't put any expectations' on her, as opposed to other agency workers. The RFP worker was always available and at the end of the phone if needed. However, the mother believed that her family 'were getting nowhere' and 'going round in circles.' She thought that too many agencies were involved with her family and the complexities concerning the foster child meant that agencies were always involved.



Family J

Background

The family household comprised a mother, father and two sons, Craig aged, 8 (who had a different biological father) and Ewan, aged 3 months. The family were referred to the RFP at the end of March 2010 by a Sure Start family support worker. There were long-standing problems in the family associated with drug use and the family were known to a wide range of services. Craig had been involved in petty offending and had previously been supported by a Youth Inclusion Project. There had been six recorded police incidents in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention, including an assault (actual bodily harm), two domestic incidents, a dog attack/bite, a missing from home and a hoax 999 call involving a child. The family had a history of Suspended Possession Orders from 2005 but there had been no housing management issues in the 12 months preceding the RFP intervention. There were significant rent arrears but these had been modestly reduced over the 12 months before the intervention.

Progress and Interventions: March 2010 to August 2010

There were lots of problems leading up to and following the birth of Ewan and medical and midwifery staff expressed concerns about the mother's treatment of the baby. The RFP worker identified that this may have been due to drug withdrawal symptoms. An interim social care order and assessment was initiated but the RFP worker requested that this be postponed while she attempted to put measures in place that would enable Ewan to return to the family home. A key concern was the state of the house and the RFP worker told the father what he needed to do, and by what time, to prevent Ewan from being taken into care. The father was reported to have 'transformed' the state of the house into 'pristine' condition and the baby was allowed to return home. The RFP supplied a new cooker and mattress to facilitate this.

It was reported that the family had 'turned things around'. The father was on methadone and the mother was not believed to be taking any drugs, although she remained aggressive to health and hospital staff. There had been a great improvement in the home environment and there had also been a significant transition within the family. The RFP workers reported that the mother was aware that she was being watched and her parenting skills were being assessed and that she could be very defensive. The RFP workers had provided parenting

guidance and had sought to ensure that appropriate house condition standards were maintained. There remained a concern that Craig was being sent to school on his own. Although the situation was being monitored, it was recognised that other children in the area of a similar age went to school independently.

Progress and Interventions: September 2010 to December 2010

Craig had not attended the first three days of the new school term. The RFP worker discovered that he did not have a uniform and accompanied Craig and his mother to purchase one. Craig then attended school regularly. Craig's mother believed that she was coping well and did not need any help and Ewan was making good progress. The RFP worker had reduced the number of visits to the family. There were no major problems during October and the mother appreciated that another RFP worker had maintained contact with her whilst her colleague had been off work. The RFP worker described the family as 'doing okay' but the family still struggled financially and the worker was concerned about the parents' attitudes to the financial resources of the RFP and the issue of dependency. The family had been encouraged to take responsibility for making their own purchases and meeting the costs of these. It was believed that the mother was continuing to avoid drug use and the father was now going independently to collect his prescription (the RFP provided the bus fares for this). There had also been some progress on parenting issues, including one of the parents taking Craig to school each morning and the mother attending the baby clinic and talking to health visitors. There was some concern that the baby was overweight. The RFP worker had encouraged the mother to attend the Sure Start centre, but she had not done so. By December, there had been no issues with the family and RFP contact had been reduced significantly, which the mother was happy with as 'there was no need.'

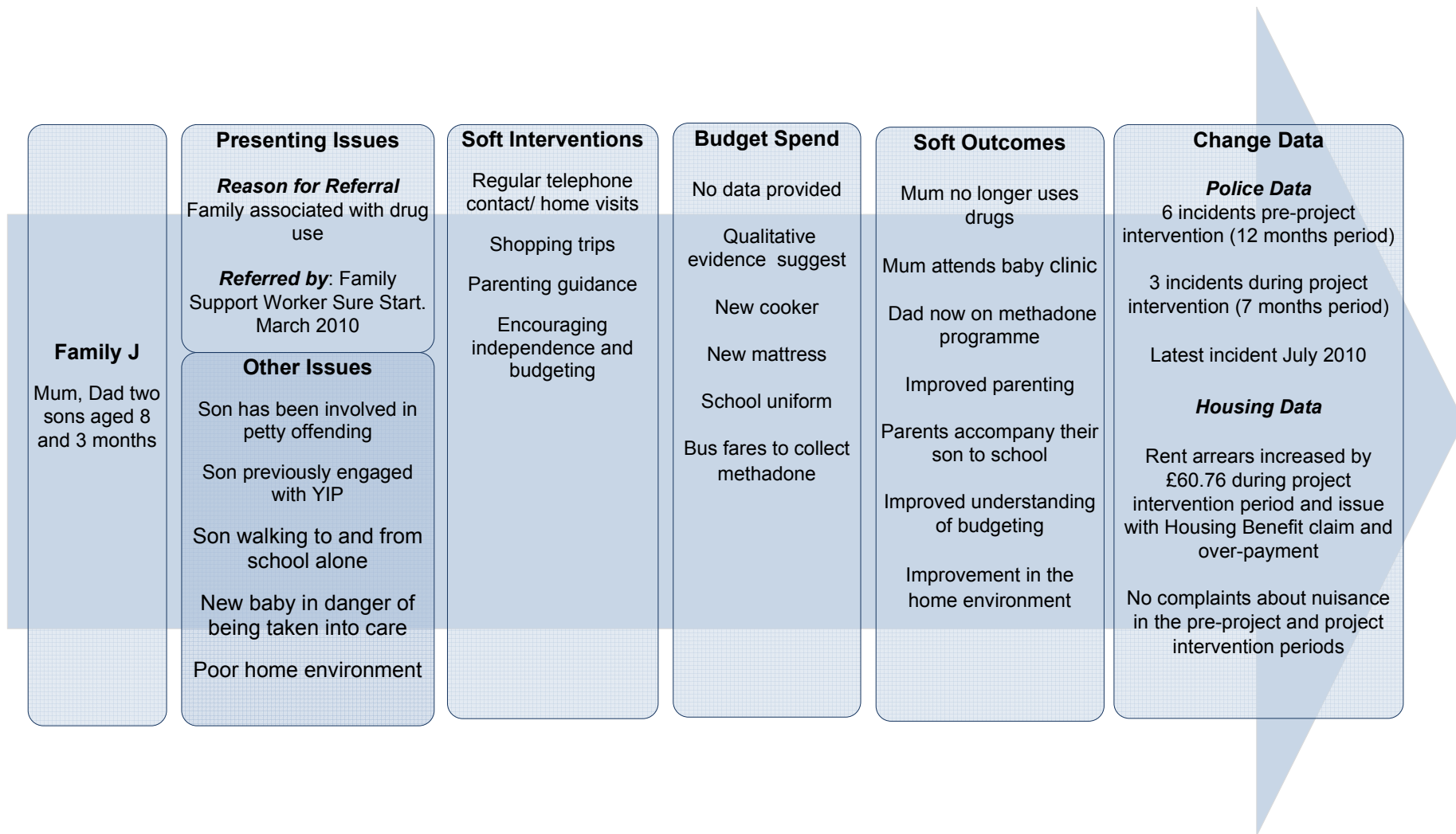
Reflections and Outcomes (at December 2010)

Although no personalised budget data was made available it appears that the RFP provided a new cooker, a mattress, a school uniform and bus fares for the father to collect his methadone prescription.

There were three recorded police incidents in the period during the RFP intervention period, including a dispute involving threats with a knife, a hoax 999 call and one incident with the household as the victim reporting suspicious circumstances and a prowler. The latest incident was recorded in July 2010. There were housing management issues during the

intervention period (there had been no issues prior to the intervention). Rent arrears increased slightly during the intervention period, related to an issue with Housing Benefit claims and over-payments. The risk of the baby being taken into care had also been avoided.

The mother appreciated the help and support given by the RFP workers, such as taking her shopping. She particularly valued the telephone contact and explained that the RFP workers would respond very quickly if she phoned them. She believed that she had got on well with her RFP worker and that they had supported her in her discussions with them. She believed that, as a result of the intervention, the family were managing their finances better and Craig was now attending school every day.



Family K

Background

The family household comprises a mother, father and son, Ethan, aged 2. The family were referred to the RFP in December 2009. The mother had been diagnosed with depression, there were parenting and assertiveness problems and Ethan had displayed psychological and behavioural problems.

Progress and Interventions: December 2009 to August 2010

Most of the focus of the intervention during this period was attempting to understand the nature and extent of the problems facing the family and their underlying issues. This was challenging as the RFP workers reported that on the surface the family could present as 'ideal' and 'fob off' agencies. The mother was very articulate and the family home was well maintained. Ethan's mother was a part-time volunteer at a Youth Link project. However, it was discovered that the mother had a very difficult childhood as her own mother had been convinced that she was disabled with narcolepsy and as a result she had spent time in a wheelchair although no formal medical diagnosis was ever made. Ethan's mother had been diagnosed with depression. The RFP workers had discussed the fabrication of Ethan's illnesses, including alleged autism and his mother's claims that she could not cope. However, it was clear that Ethan's mother was very anxious; under considerable psychological pressure and that she may suffer from a sleeping disorder. Ethan had displayed abnormal behaviour.

Ethan's mother continued to suggest that she was suffering from various illnesses although specialists could find nothing wrong with her. Ethan's father has diabetes and had nearly lost his eyesight at one point. He was the main carer for both Ethan and his mother, despite also working. The parent's relationship was evidently under considerable stress.

Progress and Interventions: September 2010 to December 2010

Ethan's mother claimed that she was disappointed that, despite asking for help on a number of occasions, she had not been contacted by a RFP worker for several weeks and that no one had returned her calls. However, she did state that when a RFP worker had visited, she

had been very helpful in providing suggestions and guidance about how to cope with Ethan, who was undergoing tests for autism. Ethan's mother valued the fact that the RFP worker 'provided a helpful ear' for her when she needed to talk to someone as sometimes she became 'bogged down' in Ethan's challenging behaviour. She felt that she was taking more control over her life and was better able to deal with situations and to cope with Ethan. She had applied for a job with a charity.

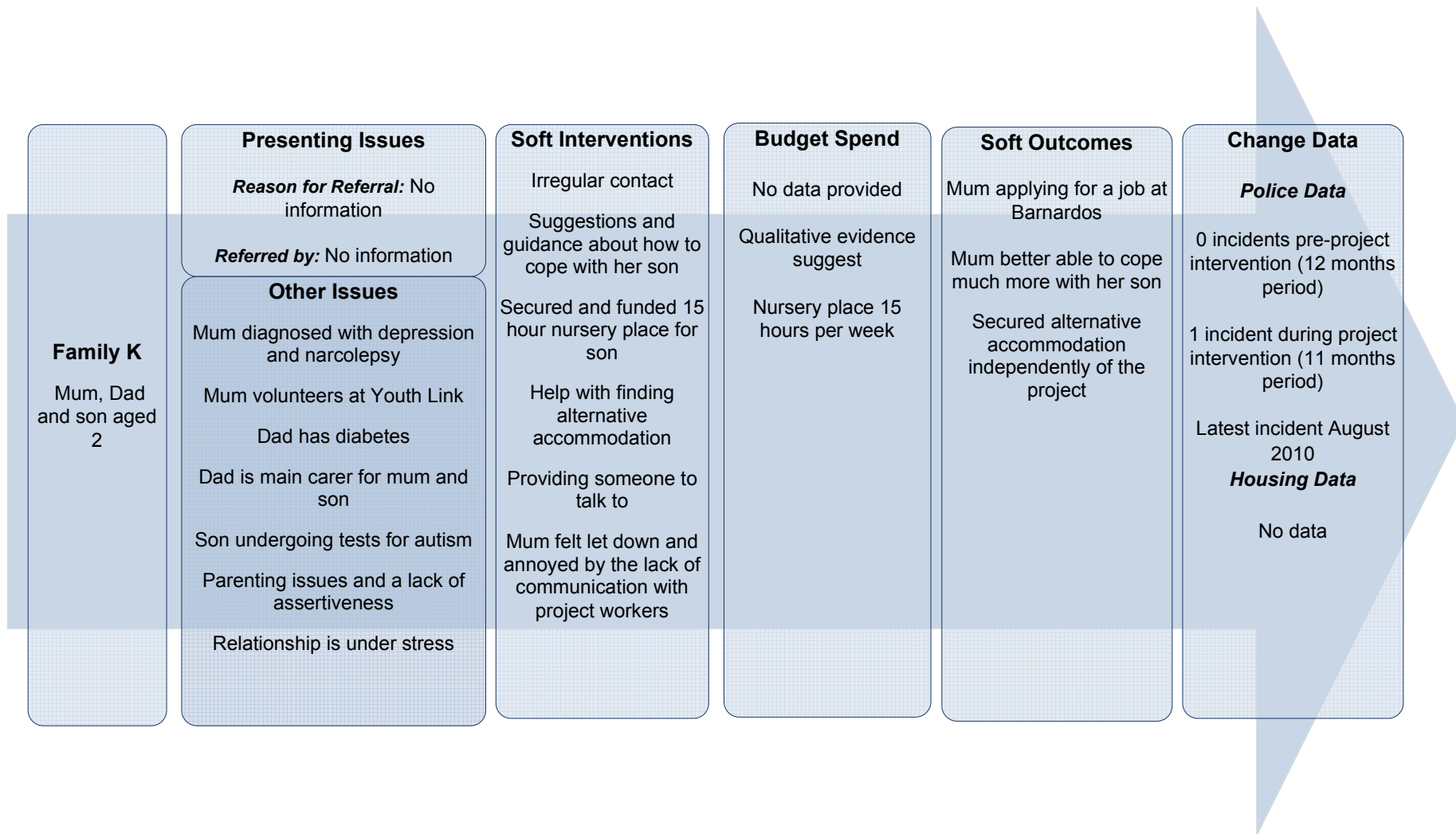
In October, Ethan's mother discovered that she was pregnant, with the baby due in the spring of 2011. She had been in hospital for a short spell due to morning sickness and her volunteering had been stopped but she was hoping to return to this in the near future. Ethan's mother reported that the RFP worker had been very helpful and instrumental in securing and funding an additional 15 hours of nursery provision for Ethan. The nursery place had made 'a massive difference' to both her and Ethan and she said the Ethan 'had come on loads.' The RFP worker was attempting to address the family's housing situation which had changed as a result of the pregnancy. Previous work had focused upon securing a specialised home to accommodate Ethan, but the priority had changed to accessing a larger house to accommodate two children. Contact with the family had been restricted due to RFP worker illness but had subsequently been increased. The RFP worker had deliberately pulled back from the family as they appeared to be doing well and were accessing help from other agencies.

In November, Ethan's mother spent short spells in hospital related to her pregnancy. Ethan's grandmother had been assisting taking care of him. The RFP worker had referred the family to a housing information service, primarily supporting homeless and vulnerable individuals. However, Ethan's mother did not consider the area where they could provide housing to be suitable for raising a family. She wanted the RFP to assist with alternative housing options as she was concerned about any potential violence Ethan may display towards a new baby if they were required to share a room. She was happy with contact with the RFP being on a once a month basis.

In December the family moved to private rented accommodation, which the mother claimed had happened without any RFP intervention. Ethan was attending nursery full-time and making good progress and his mother's health and sense of wellbeing had improved. She was happy to be exited from the project in January 2011 as 'there was not much else they could do.'

Reflections (at December 2010)

There was no available personalised budget expenditure data. There was one recorded police incident during the RFP intervention period related to the household being concerned about fraud and seeking financial advice (there had been no incidents in the 12 months preceding the intervention). The mother had somewhat contradictory perspectives on the RFP. She stated that the RFP worker had 'done a good job', had 'definitely made a difference' and that the RFP worker securing additional nursery provision for Ethan had made 'a massive difference.' She also acknowledged that the RFP worker had provided tips on managing Ethan and that the RFP worker was someone to talk to and ask how she was and that 'it was nice for someone to be interested.' However, she also stated that the RFP workers 'had not done anything major' and 'they didn't seem to know what they could do but talk about Ethan's behaviour.' She was also frustrated by the difficulties that she had experienced in contacting the RFP workers on some occasions.



Family L

Background

The family household comprises a father and his son, Adam, aged 16 and daughter, Felicity, aged 13. The mother left the family three years ago and was living in another city. The family were referred to the RFP in October 2009. There were five recorded police incidents in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention. These included affray and concern for the safety of a child. Two incidents related to the household as reported victims of criminal damage and rowdy/inconsiderate behaviour and one incident was the report of a burglar alarm ringing constantly.

Progress and Interventions: October 2009 to August 2010

The family were living in the private rented sector with no shower and there were hygiene and domestic environment issues. The father was in very poor health and, although he was viewed as trying his best, there were parenting issues and problems, which he did not always acknowledge. Felicity was the main carer and assumed adult responsibilities in the household but in other ways she was immature for her age and this had prevented her from making friends with her own age group. The RFP had attempted to get Felicity to attend a local young carer support group, but there were no places available. It was recognised that Felicity needed group interaction with young people her own age but she did not like the Youth Link provision. She was attending school everyday but did not have a social network at school. The RFP workers had taken Felicity to see films and go to McDonalds etc. There were no reported problems with Adam who attended alternative education provision, undertaking vocational courses.

Progress and Interventions: September 2010 to December 2010

In September the father reported that everything was fairly settled and that the RFP worker had assisted him in completing benefits claim forms. He was pleased that the RFP worker had spent some time with Felicity, including taking her on outings during the summer holidays. The RFP workers also took Felicity and her father to visit Adam who spent time in hospital following an accident.

In October the RFP worker accompanied Adam and his father to a meeting to discuss Adam's poor attendance at college. It was agreed that Adam would persevere with his courses. However, the relationship between Adam and his father and sister deteriorated and his father asked him to leave the family home. His father found Adam difficult to deal with and asked him to move out of the family home and Adam had gone to live with his mother and had therefore stopped attending college. Adam's father had been unable to contact him. Adam's girlfriend was pregnant.

Felicity was reported to be doing well at school and had seen an RFP-funded counsellor. She was still struggling to make friends, due in part to her caring responsibilities at home, but had recently had a couple of sleepovers. Felicity's weight, linked to 'comfort eating' was a concern. To address this and also to help Felicity broaden her social circle, the RFP had investigated her participating in street dance classes. Felicity reported feeling more settled since Adam had left the home, although her relationship with her mother remained problematic.

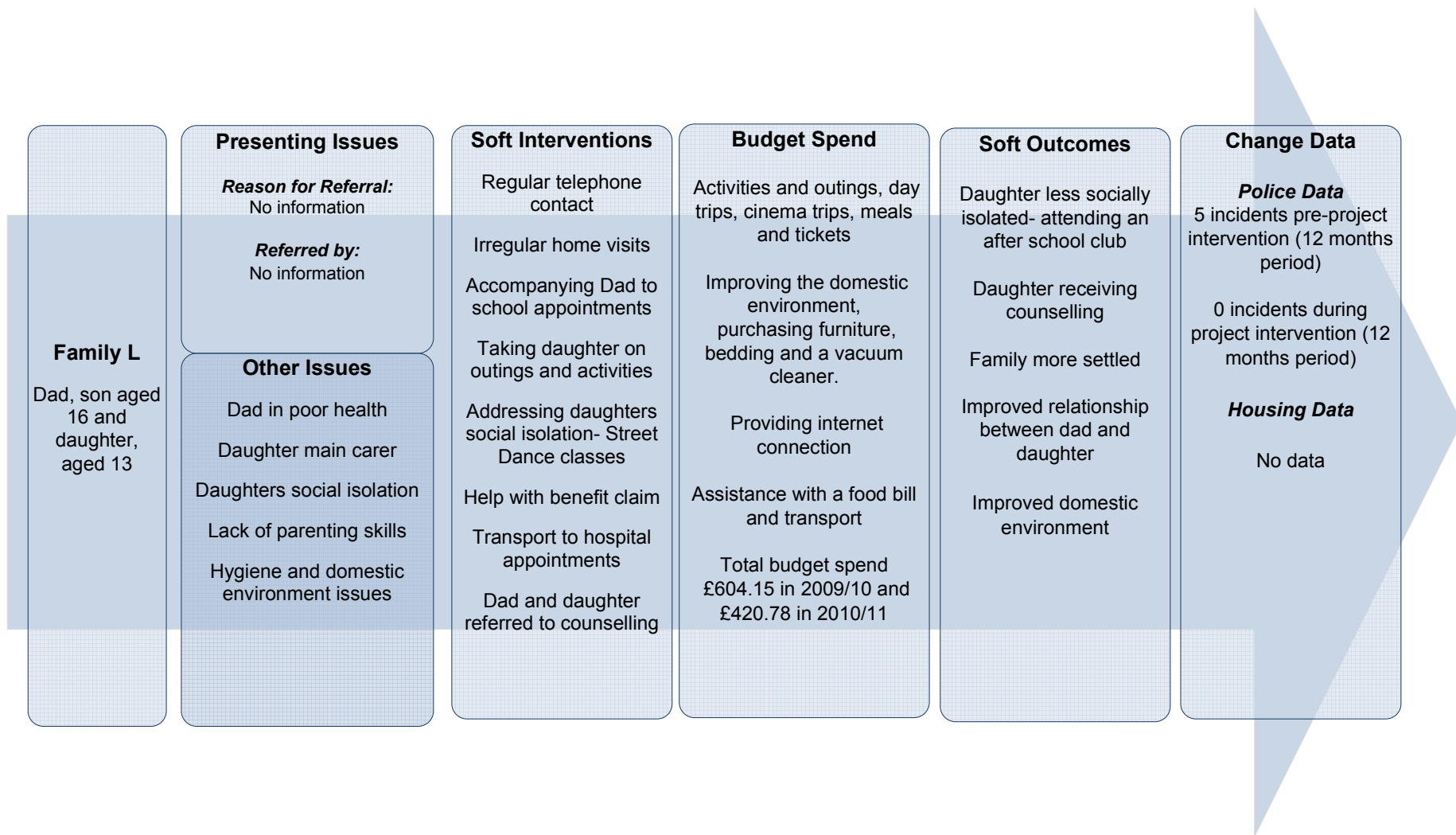
In November both Felicity and her father were attending sessions with the RFP-supported counsellors. Felicity's father believed that she 'needed someone to talk to' and become involved in social activities outside the home. Felicity continued to do well at school, particularly in science and literacy. The RFP supported Felicity to attend an after school club.

Reflections and Outcomes (at December 2010)

The main item categories of expenditure on the family were activities and outings and improving the domestic environment. These included outings, day trips, cinema trips, meals and tickets; and purchasing furniture, bedding and a vacuum cleaner. There was also support to provide internet connection for school homework and assistance with a food bill and transport. The budget spend on the family was £604.15 in 2009/10 and £420.78 in 2010/11. There had been no recorded police incidents in the period during the RFP intervention, compared to five in the preceding 12 months.

The father spoke positively about the RFP workers. In particular he found their support to attend appointments very helpful in terms of cost savings and time. He reported that the RFP workers were 'really important', 'they help a lot' and 'they take the pressure off.' He believed that the RFP had helped Felicity to gain confidence and attend activities outside the home and said: 'They have helped me and my family so much in working with my children and taking me to hospital appointments and generally being there if we needed them.' He

also valued 'chats over a cuppa.' Although the RFP workers had not always been able to visit on a regular basis, the father was pleased with the support they offered and was confident that if he phoned, the RFP workers would respond, either by phone or with a visit.



Family M

Background

The family household comprises a mother and her three sons Thomas, aged 18, Joe, aged 16 (who lived with his grandparents) and Michael, aged 15. Their father, who had served a custodial sentence for drugs offences, had been killed in an accident shortly after his release from prison some years previously.

Michael was referred to the RFP in January 2010. He had a history of offending, including drug dealing, which had resulted in conflicts and confrontations at the family property. He had previously received a suspended sentence. He had stolen from his mother and had been charged with another aggravated burglary and was subject to a curfew. Thomas had also been involved in trouble with the police. There had been one recorded police incident; of grievous bodily harm (involving two members of the household as perpetrator and victim) in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention.

Progress and Interventions: January 2010 to May 2010

The RFP workers identified that the mother's parenting approach was 'weak' and 'ineffective', due largely, they believed, to feelings of guilt and she found it very difficult to be assertive with, and maintain some control over, Michael. The RFP workers were explicit with Michael about the consequences of him not adhering to his curfew conditions. He did so and this led the RFP workers to believe that he was able to respond to boundaries if they were clearly enforced. Michael had a poor record of school attendance and he would not transfer to the new school following the closure of his existing educational establishment. The RFP workers believed that Michael perceived that he was unfavourably treated by his mother and grandparents in comparison with his brothers.

In contrast, the RFP worker described Thomas as 'having turned his life around.' He had joined Youth Link, become involved in the performing arts and volunteered at a youth project. However, there have been problems between Michael and Thomas, including domestic violence and fighting over the way that Michael spoke to and treated his mother. Joe was living with his grandparents.

Progress and Interventions: June 2010 to December 2010

Michael had just been made subject to a six month Youth Offending Order. He had also participated in an Early Break programme focusing on drug and alcohol issues. He appeared to be responding positively and informed the RFP worker that he had reduced his drug and alcohol consumption, although his mother disputed this. Michael was attending a Youth Inclusion Project and a 'Hidden Talent' class for pupils who were not attending school regularly. The RFP worker had tried to refer Michael to Youth Link.

Michael had been sent home for school on two occasions, for being abusive to a teacher and being under the influence of drugs. Michael was refusing to attend his new school. The RFP workers were attempting to secure a place for him at another specialist education centre. There was an escalating risk that Michael's mother would be subject to enforcement action if he did not attend some form of educational provision. The RFP worker was also attempting to access funding to enable Michael to undertake a vocational training course. Michael had been sleeping on a sofa in the family living room. The RFP workers assisted in refurbishing his bedroom and he resumed sleeping there. It was believed that Michael's mother would be compelled to attend a parenting course. The RFP workers reported that Michael did engage and could make progress, but he needed counselling to address his bereavement issues.

Contact with the family had been limited but the mother stated that she 'hadn't needed [the RFP worker] badly.' The RFP worker had assisted with family Housing Benefit and Council Tax issues and Michael's Job Seekers Allowance claim and the mother said that this support had been 'good in a practical way.' She also appreciated the emotional support being provided to her and the RFP worker 'being there at the end of the phone.'

Michael appeared in court on charges of theft and aggravated burglary. He had a Youth Offending Team worker supporting him in complying with his Youth Offending Order, which included a condition of attending a programme meeting once a week. In the middle of August Michael appeared in court for breaching this condition. Michael hoped to be subject to a curfew and electronic tagging as a mechanism for resisting peer group pressure. His mother still believed that she had little control over her son's behaviour. Contact with the RFP was sporadic.

The RFP work with the mother has focussed on addressing her debts and in particular her rent arrears, for which she has been threatened with an eviction notice. The RFP worker

negotiated a monthly rent arrears payment with the landlord. The mother completed her parenting course. Although she had engaged with this and believed that it had provided her with some techniques to resolve conflict and establish ground rules, she thought that the theory of these would be difficult to implement and sustain in practice. The RFP worker was able to persuade Michael to re-engage with the Youth Inclusion Project and this had provided him with some positive structured activities during the summer holidays. The RFP worker had also attempted to involve Michael in a Youth Link football programme. The RFP worker had established a strong relationship with Michael's Youth Inclusion Project worker, but believed that there were too many agencies involved with Michael, which was proving to be counter productive.

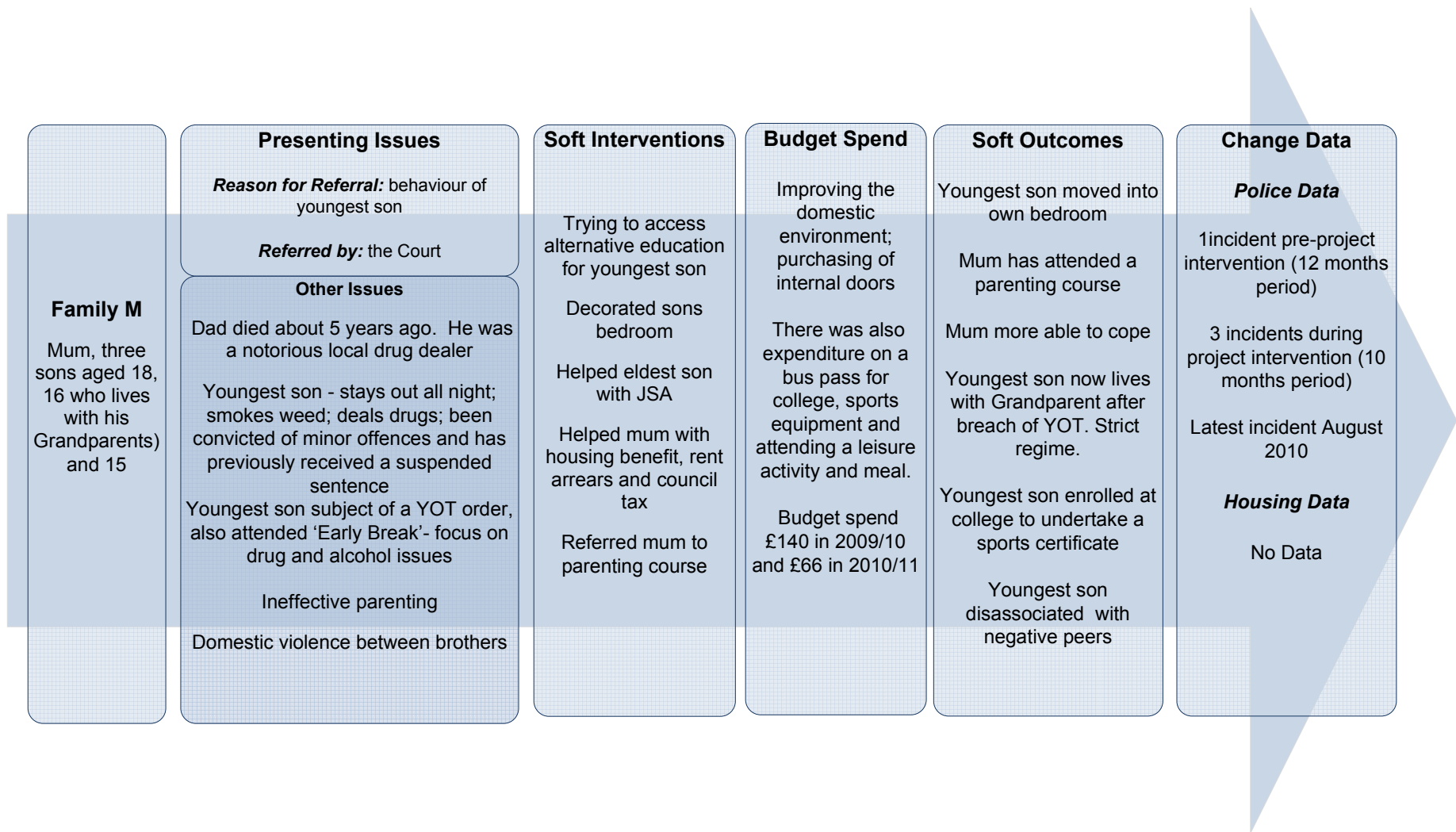
Michael received a warning from the court for breaching his Youth Offending Order but subsequently reoffended and was charged with being in possession of stolen goods. His mother refused to act as the appropriate adult and Michael was bailed to his grandparent's address. The RFP worker established contact with the grandparent and believed that she was providing a stricter and more structured regime which Michael was responding positively to. The RFP worker continued to provide support and guidance to the grandparent in sustaining this approach. Michael enrolled at a specialist education college to undertake a sports studies course. The RFP moved to exit Michael from the project in October, following his latest court appearance as it was believed that his move to his grandparent's home had stabilised his situation, although issues such as drug use were still being monitored.

Reflections and Outcomes (at December 2010)

The main item category of expenditure on the family was improving the domestic environment. This included the purchase of internal doors. There was also expenditure on a bus pass for college, sports equipment and attending a leisure activity and meal. The budget spend on the family was £140 in 2009/10 and £66 in 2010/11. There were three recorded police incidents during the period of RFP intervention, including handling stolen goods and two missing from home reports. The latest incident was recorded in August 2010.

The RFP worker believed that Michael's situation had been stabilised, although there were still some moments of crisis, and that he was living in a more positive home environment. She had attempted to utilise a solution-focused approach which she believed had been particularly effective in focusing on what was achievable given Michael's history and behaviour, which necessitated a focus on short-term goals and incremental progress.

Michael's mother reflected on her situation: 'Sometimes you think "how did I get to this stage, needing this kind of support"?' She perceived that she had to engage with the RFP as a result of the legal actions. She described the RFP as being moderately helpful: 'It's been alright, not too bad. It was put to me from the courts and if I breached it I might have got a fine. There's not harm in doing it.' She said: 'I'm not that desperate and I can always ring [the RFP worker] and know she will help if I need it.' However, she did appreciate the RFP worker being there to listen and to help her make sense of her situation and acknowledged that the RFP had resulted in some positive changes, including assisting with putting the family finances in order, helping her sons to attend educational provision more regularly and supporting Michael to associate with a more positive peer group. She believed that she had become more confident in controlling difficult situations and that her communication with Michael had improved.



Family N

Background

The family household comprises a mother and her two sons, Robert, aged 14 and Graham, aged 7. The mother has a partner who does not live with the family. There was no extended family support. The family were referred to the RFP in February 2010 by Robert's school due to his behaviour and his poor attendance record, including him absconding from school. He had been excluded from school on several occasions. Robert's mother had sought help for Robert from her GP who had referred him to CAMHS. There were no reported problems in relation to Graham. There had been four recorded police incidents in the 12 months prior to the RFP intervention. These included two domestic incidents and two incidents related to the household as victims of criminal damage and theft from a motor vehicle.

There was a history of domestic violence in the family, perpetrated by the boys' father, who still lived in the vicinity but did not engage with Robert, which Robert was deeply affected by. Robert also had a history of threatening behaviour towards his mother. She stated: 'I really needed help, I were cracking up, crying at anything...one point I just didn't want him, did not want him, had enough.' She had become increasingly fearful of Robert's behaviour which included verbal abuse, threatening and intimidating conduct, damage to property and incidents of physical aggression. Robert's mother was frightened that these incidents could escalate and become more serious given Robert's size and strength and the history within the family: 'I'd been in a relationship before where I'd been battered and Robert knew that and I don't know where he thought he were going, what he were thinking doing that to me.'

After seeking help with Robert's behaviour, his mother's GP had offered her anti-depressants which she rejected as she felt that her negative feelings and inability to cope were not her problem as such but rather a rational response to her son's problematic behaviour: 'They offered me anti depressed and I went "no I'm not depressed, it's not my problem I just can't cope with it".'

Although the GP referred Robert to CAMHS, Robert's mother explained that he had failed to engage with this support: 'We have had a counsellor talk to him but he didn't turn up for a few, he'd start off and then didn't go, "don't need it any more" so he got took off the list so that's gone.'

Robert's mother had phoned the police about Robert's behaviour on several occasions but claimed that no action had been taken other than Robert being 'talked to'. Given these

circumstances, she was grateful to be referred to the RFP although she was a little reluctant to get involved at first as she assumed it was linked to social services: 'No definitely I wanted it. At first I thought "social oh god", it's a bad vibe isn't it?'

Progress and Interventions: March 2010 to June 2010

Two RFP workers were assigned to the family, respectively working with Robert and his mother. The RFP worker identified that Robert compared himself and his situation to that of a friend who was in care and this was thought to partly underpin his abusive behaviour towards his mother.

The RFP referred Robert's mother to a 'surviving teenagers' parenting course which she had found extremely helpful and suggested that this had had a really positive impact on the situation with Robert. However, she was clear that, although the advice that she received had assisted with Robert's behaviour, this did not mean that Robert's problems were her fault, but rather that her response in the past had exacerbated incidents: 'It wasn't me but the way I was reacting to it was wrong so I learnt to calm down a bit.' She believed that she had learned to diffuse rather than aggravate conflicts with her son.

The family had some debt and financial problems and the RFP had purchased essential items including food and bedding for the boys and had also funded a family holiday. The RFP intervention had focused upon providing emotional support for Robert's mother and reinforcing her parenting strategies and the RFP workers believed that this had resulted in some progress. An RFP worker also spent one to one time with Robert, who established a positive relationship with her. However, Robert's mother was uncertain about aspects of this approach (see reflections section below): 'She'd take him out and get him McDonalds even though he'd been a little git at home.'

Both Robert's RFP worker and mother believed that his behaviour had improved significantly over recent months. Robert's mother believed that this was, in part, due to her being able to manage Robert's behaviour more effectively but was also a result of the impact of the police speaking to him after an incident: 'He's calmed down a lot and he's said a few times 'I'm really sorry for doing that''.' Evidence for the improvement in the family dynamics was given as the successful RFP-funded family holiday.

At first, Robert's mother saw the RFP worker a couple of times every week, but the amount of face to face contact had been reduced as the family situation had improved. Robert's mother described this level of contact as 'perfect' and believed that she could contact the

RFP whenever she required. She 'definitely [wanted to stay involved with the Project] even if it's just a phone number I can ring' as she was concerned that, without the RFP, she would be on her own and she believed that Robert would require support throughout his teenage years.

Progress and Interventions: July 2010 to December 2010

During July and August there was little contact between the family and the RFP although there were no major problems. Robert's mother reported that he had started at a new school which he enjoyed although he had not been attending all of the lessons. The RFP worker mediated the conflict between Robert and his mother about this and Robert apologised. Robert had been demanding money from his mother and she had requested that the RFP worker assist Robert in looking for a part time job. However, the issue of the family finances were problematic as, despite Robert's mother insisting that the family had no money, they were going on two holidays abroad. This created tension in the relationship between the RFP worker and Robert's mother and made the RFP reluctant to fund basic item purchases. Robert had begun attending cadets twice a week and was reported to be participating proactively and positively.

In September, the family situation deteriorated again. Robert's mother reported that 'things were back to square one' and Robert's behaviour at school had become problematic and he had absconded from school premises during a row about uniform. Robert had also allegedly lied to teachers about his mother getting rid of his bike. His mother attended a meeting at school but was very upset about these developments. The RFP worker had liaised with the school but believed that there was primarily a need to address the relationships within the family and had undertaken one to one work with Robert. She told Robert that she would begin attending lessons with him and this appeared to act as a deterrent and his behaviour at school subsequently improved. The parenting of Robert by the adults in his life was also very inconsistent and they tended to undermine each other's approaches. Robert had also disengaged from cadets. Robert's mother accessed a Skills 4 U course and was looking for both voluntary and paid work. She continued to appreciate the emotional support provided by the RFP workers but she was not certain what they could do for Robert and felt that she ought to be able to control him and deal with his behaviour on her own.

In October there had been no contact between the RFP and the family. Robert's mother had secured a job which was going well and had arranged child care so she could continue to work during the school holidays. Robert was often late for school and had been excluded for

assaulting another pupil. He returned to a specialist education unit within the school. Robert's mother was not certain what else she could do with Robert, although she believed that she was better able to respond to situations. She was not concerned by the lack of RFP contact.

By December Robert's mother was continuing her employment which she really enjoyed and believed it provided her with independence. However, Robert had been suspended from school again.

Reflections and Outcomes (at December 2010)

The main item category of expenditure on the family was improving family interaction through support for a family holiday. There was also expenditure on bedding and towels, clothing (including a school uniform and cadet uniform), activities and outings and a weekly bus ticket. The budget spend on the family was £612.59 in 2009/10 and £121.07 in 2010/11. There were no recorded police incidents during the period of the RFP intervention, compared to four incidents in the previous 12 months.

The RFP worker believed that the family had engaged well and that Robert's mother had appreciated the emotional support provided, including in the evenings. The intervention had been characterised by periods of progress and set backs, but the situation was more stable and the RFP were slowly withdrawing support and developing an exit strategy as the workers didn't believe there was much else they could do in this case and that Robert's behaviour was best managed by his school.

Robert's mother valued the professionalism and approach of her RFP worker, the guidance on coping with Robert and the emotional support that she had received:

"[The RFP worker] enjoys what she's doing and she likes to help you and I don't know how long she's been doing it for but she's obviously had experience and knows ways around things and stuff like that, she's just really nice and you can talk to you and tell her anything and she doesn't judge you."

"Talking about things [is the best thing], having someone there to talk to and ring when I need them when Robert really does my head in, which he hasn't done for a couple of months now. He's been pretty good, just the odd niggle."

She also explained that no matter what the issue was, for example homework, behaviour in school or parenting techniques, the RFP worker had got an idea about a possible solution.

She 'really appreciated all the RFP help' and thought that the 'surviving your teenager course' 'was brilliant and really helpful.' She said that previously her lack of confidence and problems with Robert would have prevented her seeking employment, but she did not attribute this change directly to the RFP intervention.

Robert's mother was concerned that RFP contact had been reduced because it was perceived that everything was okay but, she said 'it isn't like that.' She was not convinced that the RFP workers were what were required to address Robert's problems: 'perhaps someone else is needed to help me.' She was also critical of the provision of what she termed 'treats' during the RFP intervention. She was concerned that Graham would perceive that he would receive rewards if he began misbehaving. Secondly, she felt that the rewards were not effective in the long term as Robert would only adhere to conditions until the reward had been received and then revert back to his previous behaviour. Thirdly, she was concerned that the provision of items would set a precedent for a level of financial expenditure that she would be unable to sustain independently.

