

Troubled Family Estimates Explanatory Note

The figures presented in the table represent indicative numbers of troubled families per Local Authority, based on previous Family and Children Survey data concerning the proportion of troubled families that face multiple problems.

That survey estimated that in England there are likely to be around 120,000 families facing multiple problems. Estimates for how those families are likely to be distributed across local authorities are calculated using population estimates and indices of deprivation and child well-being.

Method for arriving at local authority estimates

The Family and Children Survey (FACS) conducted in 2005 had previously been analysed by the Social Exclusion Task Force at the Cabinet Office¹ to calculate the proportion of families with dependent children in that survey that faced 'multiple problems' i.e. ticked at least 5 of 7 tick-boxes of possible problems².

This found that 2% of families faced multiple problems. Extrapolating that figure to the population of England generated a figure of 117,000 families likely to be facing multiple problems (i.e. around 120,000). The chances of a family facing multiple problems in the FACS survey were found to be related to deprivation and poor child wellbeing. Therefore, in order to calculate estimated numbers per local authority, indices of deprivation and indices child wellbeing were used in combination with local authority population estimates³.

Specifically, two estimates were calculated using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and the Child Well-being Index (CWI⁴). The proportion of people in England living in each local authority, weighted by IMD, generated a proportion of 117,000 families likely to live in those areas. This calculation provides an indicative number of problem families in each local authority e.g.

¹ See *Reaching Out: Think Family*. Cabinet Office (2007)

² These are: a) no parent in work, b) poor quality housing, c) no parent with qualifications, d) mother with mental health problems, e) one parent with longstanding disability/illness, f) family has low income, g) Family cannot afford some food/clothing items

³ These figures model the estimated number of families with multiple problems in each local authority according to two key assumptions – 1) the index of multiple deprivation (and population) is a reasonable way of apportioning the national figure; and 2) the number of families has not changed significantly in the last 4-5 years.

⁴ Overall index of multiple deprivation based upon 7 indices including income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education, barriers to housing, crime and living environment (Communities and Local Government 2007). Children's Well Being index based upon seven domains including material well-being, health, education, crime, housing, environment and children in need (Communities and Local Government 2009). Population size is based on 2009 population estimates (Office of National Statistics).

in Barking & Dagenham the number is 640. A similar figure was generated using the CWI e.g. in Barking & Dagenham the figure is 649.

For each local authority there are two estimates, combined to identify a range. For example, in Barking & Dagenham there are estimated to be around 640 to 650 families facing multiple problems⁵. In some authorities the deprivation calculation provides the higher estimate, in others the child well-being calculation. The number presented in the table of estimates by local authority is the middle number for that range e.g. in Barking & Dagenham the figure is 645.

It should be noted that the numbers presented in the table are based on area data rather than actual data on families, and should therefore be treated as an indicative number. Further work is required to identify specific families in each local authority.

⁵ These range figures were previously published on the Department for Education website at the following link:
<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/doc/e/estimated%20distribution%20of%20families%20with%20multiple%20problems%20as%20at%20march%2011.doc>