

## Five London boroughs join forces to help troubled families stay together

- Positive Families Partnership is a new initiative designed to help deal with the pressing social challenge of keeping vulnerable families together, by preventing young people from being taken into care
- Over 350 at-risk families will be given access to therapeutic interventions with an established track record
- The programme has been jointly commissioned by five London boroughs – Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Bexley, Merton and Newham – with support from the Big Lottery Fund
- It has been structured as an outcomes contract, funded by a social impact bond – so the provider is paid for successfully keeping young people out of the care system

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Vulnerable young people in five London boroughs will now be able to access therapeutic programmes that can help them stay out of care and deliver better outcomes for them and their families, thanks to a unique collaboration between the social sector, local government and social investors.

This pioneering initiative, the first of its type in London, has been jointly commissioned by the five London Borough Councils of Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Bexley, Merton and Newham, with support from the Big Lottery Fund using National Lottery funding.

Positive Families Partnership will work with over 350 young people involved in serious antisocial behaviour and/or substance misuse, who have been identified as being at risk of going into care. These vulnerable young people and their families will be offered access to therapeutic programmes designed to help address the young person's behavioural issues and improve how the family functions. These programmes are intensive, holistic interventions, based on rigorous evidence.

The initiative will utilise three specialist delivery partners, who collectively bring decades of experience of implementing evidence-based programmes across the UK: Family Psychology Mutual, Family Action, and the South West London & St George's Mental Health NHS Trust.

It has been structured as a social outcomes contract, which means Positive Families Partnership will be paid only if it succeeds in meeting certain milestones related to keeping the young person with their family and out of care.

Positive Families Partnership will benefit from management support from Social Finance UK and Bridges Fund Management, with the latter also providing over £4.5m to cover the up-front costs of the programme via a social impact bond.

The programme will be managed by the London Borough of Sutton, and will operate initially in the five London Boroughs. If successful, the partners hope to scale up their innovative work by rolling it out to other boroughs over time.



**Brigitte Squire, Programme Manager of Positive Families Partnership, said:**

“All of us believe these two therapies are the best way of keeping these vulnerable young people with their families and out of care. This pioneering new contract allows us to bring together three of the best delivery partners in the sector and provide a real solution to a pressing social challenge at scale. We look forward to proving the model in the coming years.”

**David Burnett, Chair of Positive Families Partnership, said:**

“When a similar programme was trialled in Essex, we found that the outcomes contract structure allowed us to invest in improving the way these therapies were delivered. This new partnership will allow us to draw on the lessons learned in Essex to deliver even better outcomes for these families.”

**Cllr Ruth Dombey, Leader of Sutton Council, said:**

“Finding better solutions for these young people has become one of our biggest challenges. So we’re really proud that we have been able to join forces with our colleagues in such an innovative project. We believe it has real potential to show that when commissioning children’s services, innovation and collaboration can help find new solutions to some of our most difficult social challenges.”

**Mila Lukic, Investment Director at Bridges, said:**

“We know from our previous experience of working with contracts in this area that these therapies work – if you give the delivery organisations the flexibility and the resources they need to succeed. The outcomes contract structure allows us to do that. We believe this will enable us to deliver better value for these innovative local authorities – and crucially, better outcomes for some of the most vulnerable young people in London.”

**Lisa Barclay, COO at Social Finance, said:**

“There are 10,000 children in care in London. With support, many of these young people could stay safely with their families at home. By bringing London boroughs together to access different therapies and programmes, we will be able to transform the lives of hundreds of children and their families across the city.”

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### *About Bridges Fund Management ([bridgesfundmanagement.com](http://bridgesfundmanagement.com))*

Bridges Fund Management (formerly Bridges Ventures) is a specialist fund manager focused exclusively on sustainable and impact investment, with offices in London and New York. Since 2002, the firm has raised over £900m to invest in SMEs, properties and social sector organisations that are helping to tackle some of society's biggest challenges, with a focus on four themes: health & wellbeing, education & skills, sustainable living and underserved markets.

### *About Social Finance*

Social Finance is a not-for-profit organisation that partners with the government, the social sector and the financial community to find better ways of tackling social problems in the UK and beyond. Since its formation in 2007, Social Finance has mobilised over £100 million of investment and helped to design a series of programmes, including the Social Impact Bond model, to improve outcomes for individuals with complex needs. It has sister organisations in the US and Israel and a network of partners across the world.

### *About Big Lottery Fund*

The Big Lottery Fund uses money raised by National Lottery players to help communities achieve their ambitions. From small, local projects to UK-wide initiatives, its funding brings people together to make a difference to their health, wellbeing and environment. Since June 2004 it has awarded £8.5 billion to projects that improve the lives of millions of people.

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