

# Individuals with multiple needs: the case for a national focus

Executive summary

 CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN  
FOUNDATION  
UK BRANCH

 Making Every  
Adult Matter

 CLiNKs

 homeless link

 mind

*Individuals with multiple needs: the case for a national focus*

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## **About us:**

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is an international charitable foundation with cultural, educational, social and scientific interests, based in Lisbon with offices in London and Paris. The UK Branch in London aspires to bring about long-term improvements in wellbeing, particularly for the most vulnerable, by creating connections across boundaries (national borders, communities, disciplines and sectors) which deliver social, cultural and environmental value.

[www.gulbenkian.org.uk](http://www.gulbenkian.org.uk)

Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) is a coalition of Clinks, Homeless Link and Mind formed to improve policy and services for people facing multiple needs. Together the charities represent over 1,300 frontline organisations and have an interest in the criminal justice, substance misuse, homelessness and mental health sectors. [www.meam.org.uk](http://www.meam.org.uk).

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# Why we need a national focus on individuals with multiple needs

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Every year, the average local authority in England works with 1,470 people facing multiple needs. These are some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. They face several overlapping problems including homelessness, substance misuse, mental health problems and offending.

But too often they are moved around between different services, never getting the coordinated support that would make a real difference to their lives. The costs are significant – to individuals, to communities and to the public purse.

The Government has recently announced that it wants to integrate funding and services for vulnerable people (*Budget 2015, para 2.19; Autumn Statement 2014, para 1.77 and 2.14*). This is a very welcome announcement, supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK Branch), MEAM and other charities. (*Ref 1*)

Here we set out five reasons why a national focus on multiple needs would stimulate local action, improve lives and, over time, bring national and local savings.

This executive summary should be read in conjunction with our evidence paper, which is based on recent conversations with senior government officials; local practice; and the latest statistical data.

## 1. Thousands of people across England have multiple needs

- 58,000 people are in contact with homelessness, substance misuse and criminal justice systems in any one year.
- 164,000 more are in contact with any two of these systems

Most are white men aged 25–44. Not all are single; some are parents. Around 40% also experience mental health problems. Many have long-term contact with the benefits system. Women probably appear in other datasets (e.g. domestic and sexual violence service data) and are therefore under-represented (*Ref. 2*)

## Recommendations

We recommend that a national framework should concentrate initially on the 58,000 people in contact with all three systems. It could then be widened to cover the 164,000 with any two needs and those other individuals facing multiple problems, such as the large number of women missing from the existing data. This incremental approach will allow the initiative to be evaluated and developed before it expands to support more people.

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## 2. There is a strong role for national leadership

Some local areas are doing excellent work. But, in most, services still work separately. This is because the national policy environment promotes a culture of silos working on specific issues within organisational boundaries. This is not sustainable.

There have been government-led initiatives in the past that have sought to encourage local solutions for individuals with multiple needs. They have taught us much about ‘what works’ locally but they have not yet led to longer-term funding or a nationwide framework for action.

Conversely, the Troubled Families programme has shown the effectiveness of central government setting national outcomes within which local interventions can be developed and delivered. The Ministerial Working Group on Homelessness also recommends joint approaches to support people with multiple needs.

### Recommendations

We recommend that a new national focus could incentivise local action leading to cost savings and better outcomes for people with multiple needs.

## 3. A national framework will empower local action

National doesn’t mean ‘top-down’, and our discussions with senior officials have suggested that a hybrid model would be the most appropriate way to proceed.

With a hybrid model, all government departments with a direct interest would set out broad national outcomes, provide targeted funding, and support evaluation. Local areas would be responsible for delivering the programme locally. Interventions would seek to achieve systemic change, so as to reduce the need for a programme in the longer-term.

Funding could be provided in a similar way to the Troubled Families programme, including attachment fees, grant aid and payment by results. Alternatively it could be provided as a single payment to local areas on receipt of clear plans for how they will meet nationally agreed outcomes locally.

People with lived experience of multiple needs and the voluntary sector should be fully involved in the national design of the new programme. Its name and the way it is described should be positive and contribute towards reducing the stigma associated with multiple needs.

### Recommendations

We recommend that a national framework combine the best elements of programmes like Troubled Families, the Better Care Fund and Total Place. The framework should be flexible enough to encourage a wide range of local interventions, with local areas responsible for devising the shape of these interventions and delivering the programme locally. Individuals with lived experience of

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multiple needs and the voluntary sector should be fully involved in the national design of the programme and its name and language should be wholly positive.

Central government would:

- Define top-level goals and outcomes
- Provide targeted funding
- Evaluate overall progress
- Ensure a positive name and language

Local areas would:

- Decide how to deliver the programme
- Coordinate the services that each individual requires
- Develop provision to make best use of services and reduce costs

## **4. Spending on this group is considerable and better coordination could reduce this**

Estimates from two recent studies suggest current national costs for the 58,000 individuals are between £1.1–2.1bn per year. (*Ref. 3*) This cost is reactive, and often spent from national allocations, such as through the Criminal Justice System.

The Troubled Families programme cost £448m over three years for 120,000 families. If we assume a national focus for the 58,000 individuals identified to date with multiple needs could be delivered at the same proportional cost, it would require an investment of £216 million over three years. This represents a proactive investment of between 3.4% and 6.5% of total current annual costs.

The Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coalition has shown that better coordination of local services can reduce costs for individuals with multiple needs by up to 26.4%. The data shows that costs began to reduce after two years of intervention. More longitudinal data will be needed and a significant benefit of a national focus will be the ability to collect this data at scale for the first time.

## **Recommendations**

We recommend developing the national framework in two stages:

- Stage 1 – focus on the 58,000 individuals with most complex needs using the same mix of funding arrangements as the Troubled Families programme. This is based on grant aid, attachment fees and payment by results.
- Stage 2: Following evaluation, scale up investment in a second stage, bringing in the additional 164,000 people and those other individuals facing multiple problems. Evidence from the first stage would inform effective approaches and allow for the development of new funding approaches, including social investment and social impact bonds.

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## 5. There is growing evidence of what works to help this group

A hybrid model would place responsibility for the design of interventions on local areas. Following work by the government and the voluntary sector over many years a lot has been learnt about the important elements of better-coordinated services:

- The Revolving Doors Agency has evaluated three promising models.
- Evidence from ‘Fulfilling Lives’, the new £112m Big Lottery Fund programme, is starting to provide information on effective approaches.
- The MEAM Approach proposes seven elements that all local interventions should consider, but is not prescriptive about how these are achieved.
- There is helpful evidence emerging about the need for trauma-informed approaches to service delivery.
- It is increasingly clear that to be successful and effective, local services need to be designed, shaped, monitored and led by the people who use them.

### Recommendations

We recommend that these sources of information form a helpful starting point for local areas tasked with designing better-coordinated interventions. Local authorities and their partners can decide which model or models are appropriate for their areas. People with lived experience of multiple needs and the voluntary sector should be fully involved in the design, delivery and monitoring of local interventions.

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## References

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This paper has summarised the five reasons that we need a new national focus on multiple needs. Full analysis is available in our evidence paper, which should be read in conjunction with this executive summary. General references are provided below:

Ref1: For example, MEAM (<http://bit.ly/1HLJOci>); Framework (<http://fiveactions.org/>) and Revolving Doors Agency (<http://bit.ly/1OylsCy>)

Ref2: Fitzpatrick, S; Bramley, G et al (2014) Hard Edges: Mapping severe and multiple disadvantage – England, LankellyChase Foundation, London.

Ref3: For full analysis please see section 4 of the accompanying evidence paper. The sources are Fitzpatrick, S. et al 2014 (above) and Battrick, T et al (2014), Evaluation of the MEAM pilots – update on our findings, London, FTI/PBE.