

MEAM Approach network communications guide



Introduction

This resource provides practical advice on communications for areas in the MEAM Approach network.

We hope it helps you to promote the work of your partnership, influence local stakeholders and highlight your place within a national movement to coordinate services and change systems for people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

The resource covers:

- Why communicate?
- The MEAM Approach network: narrative
- Key messages when discussing multiple disadvantage
- Key messages for policymakers
- Use of logos
- Branding your local intervention
- Tone of voice
- Tips for using social media
- Things we ask and support we can offer

We would like this to be a living resource developed over time. We would welcome your input for future editions.

Why communicate?

Communicating through the media is a great way to raise the profile of your work and help influence the people you need to support it. Examples can be found in both MEAM Approach areas and the Big Lottery Fund's Fulfilling Lives partnerships.

The **Counting Every Adult** service in Cambridgeshire appeared on a series of local television and radio news programmes. With the support of Danny, a person with lived experience, they were able to talk about the person centred approach that Cambridgeshire is using to better support people experiencing multiple disadvantage and how commitment across the partnership has enabled them to change the traditional system and ensure better outcomes for Danny. They featured on BBC Look East, BBC Radio Cambridgeshire and ITV Anglia.

Inspiring Change Manchester were able to promote their Housing First work on BBC Radio 4's Today programme. Matthew was interviewed about his Housing First tenancy and the wrap around support he continues to receive. Shelter, as lead partner, highlighted the issue of multiple needs and the different approach they are taking within the city.

To help you talk about your work, we have developed a narrative and a series of key messages about multiple disadvantage for different audiences. These are intended as a basic framework from which you can begin to develop your own messages. We encourage you to share this guide with any internal communications teams across your partnership.

The MEAM Approach network: narrative

You can use this to help tell a persuasive story about why it's important to tackle multiple disadvantage, and the network you are part of.

- People experiencing multiple disadvantage face a combination of problems including homelessness, substance misuse, contact with the criminal justice system and mental ill health. They fall through the gaps between services and systems, making it harder for them to address their problems and lead fulfilling lives.
- The Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coalition is made up of the national charities Clinks, Homeless Link and Mind.
- The MEAM Approach is a framework to help local areas develop effective, coordinated services for people facing multiple disadvantage, and promote lasting, embedded change to local systems.
- Thirty two local areas across England are using the MEAM Approach. Together we form a network that is increasing individuals' wellbeing, reducing costs to public services and improving people's lives.
- We draw on our shared knowledge and practical experience to change systems, services and policy so that everyone experiencing multiple disadvantage can reach their full potential and contribute fully to their communities.

Key messages when discussing multiple disadvantage

Use these points to help explain multiple disadvantage to audiences who might not be familiar with the issue or your work.

- People experiencing multiple disadvantage face a combination of problems including homelessness, substance misuse, contact with the criminal justice system and mental ill health. They fall through the gaps between services and systems, making it harder for them to address their problems and lead fulfilling lives.
- It is estimated that 58,000 people face problems of homelessness, substance misuse and offending in any one year. Within this group, a majority will have experienced mental health problems. Women are under-represented in these figures, but despite this face significant and distinct challenges which need to be met. Similarly, people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities experience a range of social inequalities which contribute to their experience of multiple disadvantage.
- People's likelihood of experiencing multiple disadvantage is increased both by growing up in circumstances of material deprivation, and experiencing abuse or neglect in early life.
- This group tend to be known to everyone, but often are served by no one as they are perceived to be 'hard to reach' or 'not my responsibility.'



Key messages for policymakers

- National and local policy decisions have created an environment where it is more difficult than it should be for services to work together to address multiple disadvantage.
- Government should develop a cross-departmental approach to multiple disadvantage, ensuring that funding, accountability and outcomes structures prioritise recovery and rehabilitation and allow local areas to develop a flexible response.
- People experiencing multiple disadvantage should receive appropriate, flexible and personalised support to help them move towards independence.
- The most powerful advocates for changing policy and practice around multiple disadvantage are people with lived experience of these issues.
- Government and decision-makers should listen to the voices of people experiencing multiple disadvantage and the frontline staff who support them, to ensure that policies properly reflect their experiences and meet their needs.

You may also like to use MEAMs publication - [Multiple Needs: Time for Political Leadership](#)



Use of logos



Working as part of
The MEAM Approach

Helping areas design and
deliver coordinated services

- All MEAM Approach areas are entitled to use the MEAM Approach logo to show that they are working in partnership with the MEAM coalition and as part of the national MEAM Approach network.
- Please do not use the logos and branding of Homeless Link, Clinks, Mind or the MEAM coalition.



- Please also reference the support of the Big Lottery Fund
- Further guidance on use of The National Lottery Community Fund logo can be found [here](#)

Branding your local intervention

- We encourage you to consider a unique name for your programme of work.
- In line with the terms and conditions, please do not refer to your work as the 'MEAM service' or similar.
- Agreeing a unique name can increase local buy in, consolidate the values of your partnership and help you promote your intervention. It can also illustrate clearly that you are not just creating another service but working to better coordinate existing services and the wider system in which they operate.
- It can also help distinguish your local intervention from the 'MEAM Approach' itself.
- For example, you may say "Lisbon's Improving Access programme is based upon the MEAM Approach framework". Current examples from the network include the Counting Every Adult Team in Cambridgeshire, The Waves Project in Halton and Improving Lives Together in Sunderland.

Tone of voice

Across MEAM, we try and adopt a tone of voice that reflects our way of working, and encourage you to do the same.

Collaborative: We know that we need to work effectively together, in order to help systems and services work better together

Authentic: Everything we say should be based on evidence and experience

Empathetic: We use language that shows we understand that we are talking about people's lives

Pragmatic: We understand how to create change, but equally we are aware of the challenges faced by people with experience of multiple disadvantage and those who work with them.

Tips for using social media

Social media offers an opportunity to communicate the work of your partnership as it develops and the key messages you would like people to know about multiple disadvantage in your area.

Many councillors, MPs, journalists and other organisations are on Twitter so this can be a useful forum for sharing regular updates.

When using social media remember to:

- Consider key messages and tone in your online communications.
- Tweet regularly on topics of interest to build follower numbers
- Engage in debate but don't enter into arguments
- Don't use twitter as a way to engage with people you have not met, especially if the message is a difficult or complex one.

We encourage you to interact with our MEAM coalition Twitter account and together we can build the presence of our MEAM network.



@MEAMcoalition

Things we ask and support we can offer

- ✓ Please inform your Partnerships Manager about your communications and in particular any planned media coverage.
- ✓ Partnerships Managers can support you with the development of your own key messages and how to communicate your values and approach.
- ✓ If you would like to discuss the content of your communications, ask for comments on draft documents or require help preparing for media interviews then please get in contact.
- ✓ The policy team can help you to frame your work within the national policy landscape and discuss any local policy communications you would like to create.
- ✓ In line with our terms and conditions, please do not make any public statement about the MEAM coalition or The National Lottery Community Fund without speaking to us first.