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Dear Sir/Madam,

New Horizons consultation response

Making Every Adult Matter is a coalition of four national membership charities focusing on adults with multiple needs and exclusions. The coalition represents over 1600 frontline agencies working across mental health, criminal justice, homelessness and drug treatment services in local areas.

The issue of multiple needs and exclusions is of significant relevance for the New Horizons strategy and for a shared vision for mental health in this country. We are pleased to be able to respond.

Some members of the coalition - DrugScope, Homeless Link and Mind - have made detailed responses to the New Horizons consultation that mention multiple needs, as have other charities such as Revolving Doors Agency. This letter is an additional brief submission from the coalition itself.

Context

Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) was formed because of the recognition that many of the individuals supported by our 1600 frontline member agencies are the same people. These individuals face multiple needs and exclusions because they (a) experience a number of issues that impact adversely on their lives (b) are routinely excluded from effective contact with the services they need and (c) tend to lead chaotic lives that are costly to society as a result.

They move between mental health, criminal justice, homelessness and drug treatment services, but rarely get the overall help they need to make meaningful changes to their lives and engage in the rights and responsibilities of community life. Most are part of the homelessness or criminal justice population. Differing priorities and organisational cultures mean that they are often excluded from local services or that they receive help with one, but not all, of their needs. This is problematic for them, their communities and for local and national budgets.

Through MEAM we are highly committed to working with our frontline member agencies and statutory partners to achieve change in local areas. To achieve this ambition we are also seeking the support of national and local government policy and have recently published a four-point manifesto for the next parliament on tackling multiple needs and exclusions, a copy of which is attached as part of this submission.

Below we respond briefly and directly to some of the consultation questions.

Consultation questions

1. What do you think are the most important changes for mental health and mental health care in the next ten years? And why?

We list just one main change. The New Horizons strategy must make a strong statement of commitment to addressing the issue of mental health for people with multiple needs and exclusions.

People with multiple needs can suffer from a range of mental health problems from the most common to the severe (including personality disorder) and which may or may not be diagnosed. What unites these individuals' experiences is that they are usually excluded from effective contact with the services they need to help them move forward in their lives. For example, mental health services (primary and secondary) often fail to help:

- People with multiple needs who have common mental health problems that are viewed as below the threshold for case managed support. This ignores the interplay of their mental health problems with their other needs (such as substance misuse, homelessness, use of the criminal justice system) and the fact that they are likely to be living extremely chaotic lives that are costly to them and society.
- People with multiple needs who have severe mental health problems that are not properly assessed because teams turn away people with multiple problems; or people with multiple needs who have diagnosed needs but are then excluded from mental health services because of their other needs or chaotic behaviour.

Over the past ten years there has been significant improvement in the recognition and treatment of dual diagnosis, which tends to be associated with severe mental health problems and substance misuse (the second bullet point above).

New Horizons must go one step further and address the first bullet point. It must recognise that people with multiple needs and mental health problems, even common mental health problems, need to have access to a swift and holistic response from mental health and other services because of the complexities caused by the interaction of their needs. Turning these people away from mental health support, as often occurs at the moment, leads only to lives of chaos and deep social exclusion that is costly to individuals and society. Tackling this will require a coordinated local response to people with multiple needs and the delivery of a range of mental health services to meet their needs.

The final New Horizons strategy must therefore:

- Make a clear statement and firm commitment to tackling the mental health needs of people with multiple needs, including those who have only common mental health problems (without excluding those with more severe mental health problems)
- Explicitly recognise multiple needs and exclusions. At present, people with multiple needs are not directly mentioned in the consultation document. The final strategy should include explicit recognition of multiple needs in both the 'better mental health and well-being for adults' and the 'better mental health care for adults' sections and be clear that this includes people with more common mental health issues alongside other needs. It should also make stronger references to multiple needs when discussing linked strategies (p100) and effective multi-agency commissioning (p103). The definition of the multiple needs group can be taken from our manifesto report (p9).
- Draw on the findings from the Cabinet Office funded Adults Facing Chronic Exclusion (ACE) pilots and link the final New Horizons strategy to the work underway to implement the Bradley Review recommendations for people in the criminal justice system.
- Encourage local areas to define people with multiple needs and exclusions locally (p8 of our manifesto) and to provide an effective service response (this is likely to include access to a range of mental health services, including counselling, coping with life courses, talking therapies and interventions such as CBT delivered not just by mental health services but by a range of local partners, thus making mental health everyone's business and supporting people across other frontline services to understand mental health and to know how to offer help/signpost effectively to services when required).
- Push to make these commitments on multiple needs in New Horizons the first step towards a national cross-government policy framework on multiple needs and exclusions as outlined in our manifesto (p12) so that all government departments and local services play their part
- Put in place data requirements to measure the progress of working with this group

5. In your view, what are the most important areas in mental health services where value for money could be improved?

Failing to support people with multiple needs to move forward with their lives is costly for them, their communities and for local and national budgets. Leaving people to 'recycle' around mental health, criminal justice, homelessness and drug treatment services, without the effective holistic support they need leads to excessive emergency use of health and criminal justice interventions (for examples of cost effectiveness please see p11 of our manifesto report).

The final New Horizons strategy must therefore:

- Make the cost effectiveness argument for providing appropriate mental health services for people with multiple needs and exclusions, highlighting the savings to other government departments (in particular the Ministry of Justice, Communities and Local Government and the physical health budgets at the NHS/Department of Health)
- Promote this approach as the first part of a cross-government national policy framework for tackling multiple needs and exclusions

9. How can we promote joint working between local authorities, the NHS and others to make New Horizons effective in your local area?

The MEAM manifesto attached as part of this submission calls for the government to commit to developing a national policy framework on multiple needs and exclusions that defines the group; recognises the social and economic case for action; puts in place a duty of active local cooperation on tackling multiple needs and exclusions; and measures national progress.

The New Horizons strategy could play a significant part in moving this agenda forward in the area of mental health.

The final New Horizons strategy must therefore:

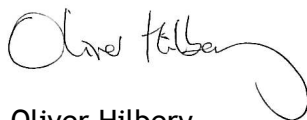
- As part of a firm commitment to tackling mental health for people with multiple needs, make a series of suggestions for how local areas can cooperate in defining people with multiple needs and providing an effective local service response (p8 of the manifesto)
- Call for other government departments to recognise the need for a cross-government policy framework on people with multiple needs and exclusions and the central role that mental health and wellbeing has in this agenda.

Conclusion

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to the consultation. Please let me know if we can provide further information on any of the issues raised in this response.

Making Every Adult Matter looks forward to working with the government towards a New Horizons strategy that makes a strong and active commitment to tackling the mental health needs of people with multiple needs, as we believe that if we can get it right for them, we can get it right for everyone.

Regards,



Oliver Hilbery
Project Director