

MEAM

# MEAM Approach evaluation: Year 1 report

31 March 2018

# Table of contents

<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2 About MEAM and the MEAM Approach .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 Overview .....	9
2.2 MEAM coalition .....	9
2.3 Definition of people facing multiple disadvantage .....	10
2.4 Development of the MEAM coalition .....	10
2.5 Aims of the MEAM coalition .....	12
2.6 MEAM Approach .....	12
2.7 Development of the MEAM Approach network .....	13
<b>3 Local areas in the MEAM Approach network .....</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Overview .....	16
3.2 Areas participating in the MEAM Approach network .....	16
3.3 Aims of local work using the MEAM Approach .....	18
3.4 Reasons for joining the MEAM Approach network .....	19
3.5 Approaches taken in local areas .....	20
3.6 Local partnerships .....	22
<b>4 MEAM Approach so far .....</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1 Overview .....	24
4.2 Successes achieved in local areas .....	24
4.3 Successes achieved so far by the MEAM coalition .....	25
4.4 Benefits of the MEAM Approach network .....	26
4.5 Future hopes and expectations .....	27
4.6 Challenges to development and delivery .....	28
4.7 Conclusions .....	31
<b>Appendix A: methodology for scoping phase .....</b>	<b>32</b>
Overview .....	32
Review of documentation .....	32
Interviews with representatives from local areas .....	32

# Executive summary

## Introduction

This is the Year 1 (scoping) report for the longitudinal evaluation of the MEAM Approach. The evaluation has been commissioned by the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coalition and is being delivered by Cordis Bright, an independent research and consultancy organisation, in conjunction with the MEAM coalition team, local areas using the MEAM Approach and people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage. The evaluation will take place over five years between 2017 and 2022.

This Year 1 report was produced in March 2018. It draws upon a review of documentation, interviews with stakeholders from the 23 local areas who were part of the MEAM Approach network on 1 February 2018, and interviews with the MEAM coalition team. It provides baseline information on the current context and progress of the MEAM Approach in order to inform subsequent evaluation reports and to inform the development of a framework to guide the evaluation over the next four years. This evaluation framework is available as a separate report.

## About MEAM and the MEAM Approach

### The MEAM coalition and its aims

MEAM is a coalition of three national charities – Clinks, Homeless Link, and Mind, formed to improve policy and services for people facing multiple disadvantage<sup>1</sup>. Collective Voice, representing the substance misuse sector is an associate member.

The five year period from 2017 to 2022 represents an exciting period for the MEAM coalition as it expands its work in local areas across England and works towards four ambitious strategic aims. These are:

- Supporting areas across the country to change the way that services, systems and people work for, and with, people facing multiple disadvantage.
- Helping policymakers and commissioners to understand the challenges experienced by individuals facing multiple disadvantage and ensuring local and national policy helps people to get the right support.
- Promoting the value of every adult in our society and improving insight and attitudes towards people facing multiple disadvantage.
- Continuing to build a strong MEAM coalition.

---

<sup>1</sup> Until recently the MEAM coalition and local areas tended to use the term “multiple needs” but have recently replaced this with multiple disadvantage

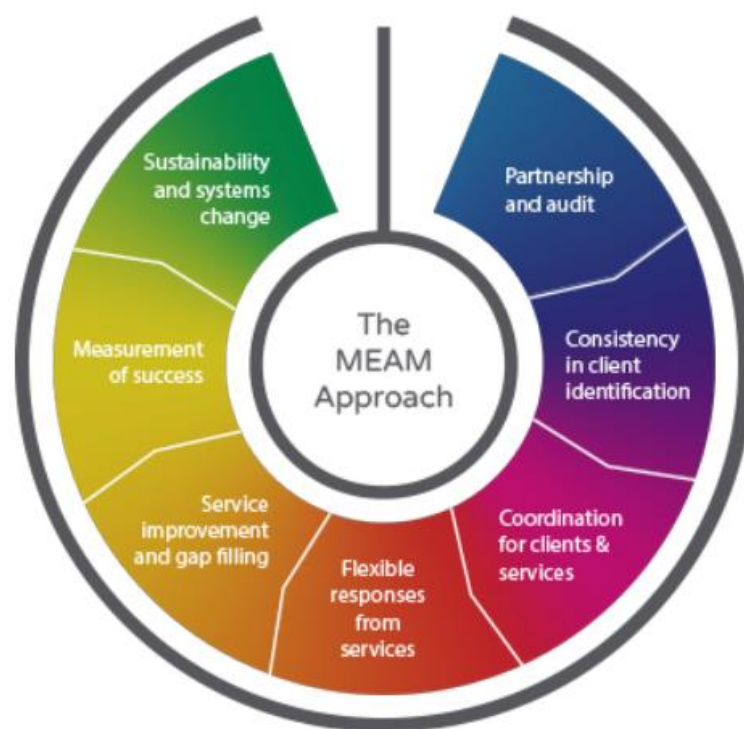
## The MEAM Approach

In order to achieve these aims, the MEAM coalition is expanding the number of local areas that are using a framework called the MEAM Approach.

The MEAM coalition developed the MEAM Approach in 2013 as a non-prescriptive framework to help local areas to design and deliver better coordinated services for people facing multiple disadvantage<sup>2</sup>.

The MEAM Approach includes seven core elements that should be considered by all local areas, but it does not prescribe a particular way in which these elements should be achieved. The framework is summarised in Figure 1.

*Figure 1: Seven elements of the MEAM Approach*



*Source: The MEAM Approach website (2018)<sup>3</sup>*

## Local areas in the MEAM Approach network

The MEAM Approach network has been developing since 2013. In 2017, supported by the Big Lottery Fund, the coalition put in place a new fixed cohort of

<sup>2</sup> MEAM coalition (2013). FAQs. [www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach](http://www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach)

<sup>3</sup> The MEAM Approach website: [www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach](http://www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach)

MEAM Approach areas, which are receiving support from the MEAM Local Networks Team and working together to share practice and provide peer support.

### Participating areas

Local areas in the new cohort were recruited through an open and competitive Expression of Interest process which ran during the second half of 2017 and the network was formally launched in November of that year.

As at 1 February 2018, 23 local areas are involved in the MEAM Approach network. Some of these areas have been using the MEAM Approach for a while, while others are new. The areas are:

- Adur and Worthing
- Basingstoke and Deane
- Blackburn with Darwen
- Cambridgeshire
- Coventry
- Cornwall
- Doncaster
- Durham
- Exeter
- Hackney
- Halton
- Hull
- North Lincolnshire
- Norwich
- Plymouth
- Preston
- Reading
- Slough
- Southend-on-Sea
- Sunderland
- Surrey
- West Berkshire
- York

### Aims of local work using the MEAM Approach

From the stakeholder interviews, we observed a good level of agreement between local areas and the MEAM coalition team regarding the aims of the local work being developed using the MEAM Approach. The over-arching aims are summarised in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Over-arching aims of the MEAM Approach



### Current structure of local partnerships

All local areas using the MEAM approach have a multi-agency partnership in place to guide the work, with representatives from statutory and voluntary services. Evidence from interviews and a review of documentation submitted to the MEAM coalition team by local areas indicates that these partnerships are most frequently led by local authorities. A strong theme emerged from stakeholder interviews that mental health services, in particular statutory mental health services, tended to be more difficult to engage than other partner organisations.

### MEAM Approach so far

#### Current strengths and benefits

Stakeholder interviews demonstrate that early successes in local areas have included bringing partners on board and gaining their commitment to a new approach to supporting people facing multiple disadvantage. Some local areas who had been using the MEAM Approach for a longer period of time were also able to demonstrate early successes with clients supported by work using the MEAM Approach. In addition, local stakeholders were very positive about the support received from the MEAM Local Networks Team and potential future opportunities to meet and share learning with other local areas.

MEAM coalition staff viewed successes of recent months to be the recruitment and development of a full team with strong working relationships, and good engagement with the 23 areas over the early months of the work.

### Areas for future development

Evidence from the stakeholder interviews shows that current and future challenges anticipated for the MEAM Approach network included sustaining partner engagement and fostering well-embedded culture change. In addition, ongoing funding for local work developed using the MEAM Approach was a concern. However, stakeholders provided approaches to addressing the majority of these challenges and the willingness to share best practice and knowledge between local areas is a promising sign for the development of best practice to address these potential issues.

# 1 Introduction

This is the Year 1 (scoping) report for the longitudinal evaluation of the MEAM Approach. The evaluation has been commissioned by the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coalition and is being delivered by Cordis Bright, an independent research and consultancy organisation. The evaluation will take place over five years between 2017 and 2022 and involves five core elements. These are:

- Building research capacity in local areas developing work using the MEAM Approach.
- An outcomes evaluation of this work
- An economic evaluation of this work
- A process evaluation of this work
- Comparison to the outcomes and process of the Big Lottery's Fulfilling Lives areas<sup>4</sup>.

This report was produced in March 2018 and can be read in conjunction with the live evaluation framework, which was co-produced by MEAM coalition staff, local areas who are involved in the MEAM Approach Network, experts by experience and Cordis Bright. The methodology for developing the report is summarised at Appendix A.

---

<sup>4</sup> The comparative component of the evaluation will draw on data and findings from CFE Research (who are leading on the national evaluation of Fulfilling Lives).



## 2 About MEAM and the MEAM Approach

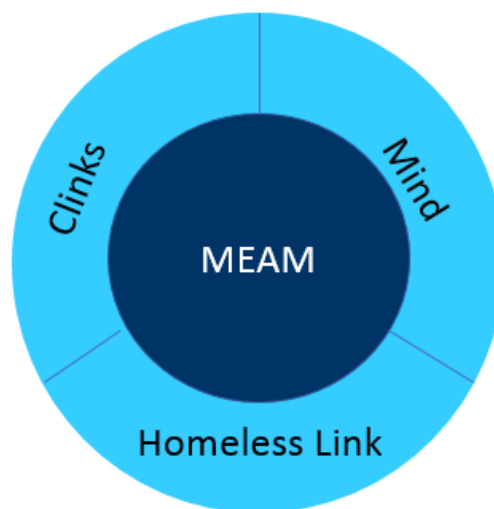
### 2.1 Overview

This section provides an overview of the MEAM coalition and the MEAM Approach. It explores the aims and objectives of the MEAM coalition and provides information on the MEAM Approach framework and its seven core elements.

### 2.2 MEAM coalition

MEAM is a coalition of national charities – Clinks, Homeless Link and Mind – that seeks to influence policy and services so that people facing multiple disadvantage are supported by effective coordinated services and empowered to tackle their problems. Collective Voice, representing the substance misuse sector, is an associate member.

*Figure 3: The structure of the MEAM coalition*



The coalition is purposefully constituted as a coalition rather than as a separate entity and together the partners aim to change the way that they – and the frontline organisations they represent – are working to tackle multiple disadvantage.

## 2.3 Definition of people facing multiple disadvantage

The MEAM coalition defines people facing multiple disadvantage as people who are experiencing<sup>5</sup>:

*“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.' This can make services seem unhelpful and uncaring to someone experiencing multiple disadvantage who is seeking help.

## 2.4 Development of the MEAM coalition

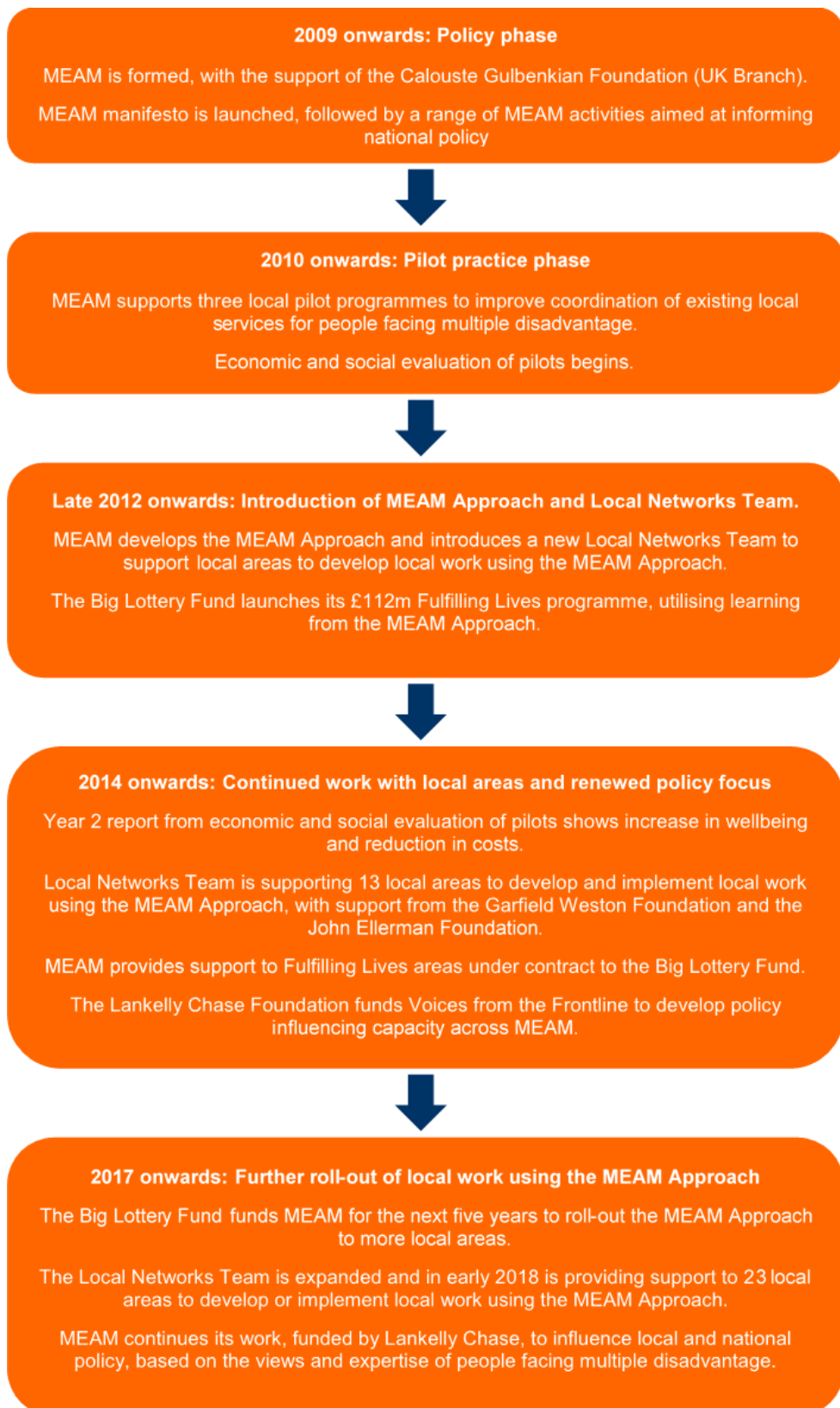
Figure 4 summarises the key stages in the development of the MEAM coalition, the MEAM Approach and the MEAM Approach Network<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>5</sup> MEAM (no date) About multiple and complex needs <http://meam.org.uk/multiple-needs-and-exclusions/> [Accessed 14/03/2018]

<sup>6</sup> This builds on a similar diagram developed by Jean Barclay Consultancy in the 2016 report: Changing systems, changing lives: A brief review of the MEAM coalition <http://meam.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/MEAM-Review-Report-26-April-2016-FINAL.pdf> [Accessed 15/02/2018]

Figure 4: Development of the MEAM coalition



## 2.5 Aims of the MEAM coalition

The MEAM coalition's strategy outlines four key aims, which are summarised in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Aims of the MEAM coalition strategy, 2016 to 2022

Aim	
<b>Aim 1:</b> Transforming local systems	We will support areas across the country to change the way that services, systems and people work for, and with, people facing multiple disadvantage.
<b>Aim 2:</b> Influencing policy change	We will help policymakers and commissioners to understand the challenges experienced by individuals facing multiple disadvantage, and ensure local and national policy helps people get the right support.
<b>Aim 3:</b> Promoting the value of every adult	We will coproduce our work with people facing multiple disadvantage and support local areas to do the same. We will promote the value of every adult in our society and improve insight and attitudes towards people facing multiple disadvantage.
<b>Aim 4:</b> Building a strong MEAM coalition	We will ensure that we continue to work together, optimising our collective skills, knowledge, and voice to model and achieve the change we want to see.

## 2.6 MEAM Approach

The MEAM coalition developed the MEAM Approach in 2013 as a non-prescriptive framework to help local areas to design and deliver better coordinated services for people facing multiple disadvantage<sup>7</sup>.

The framework is based on the coalition partners' experience in policy and practice, and evidence from the MEAM pilots (2010-2014) which showed that

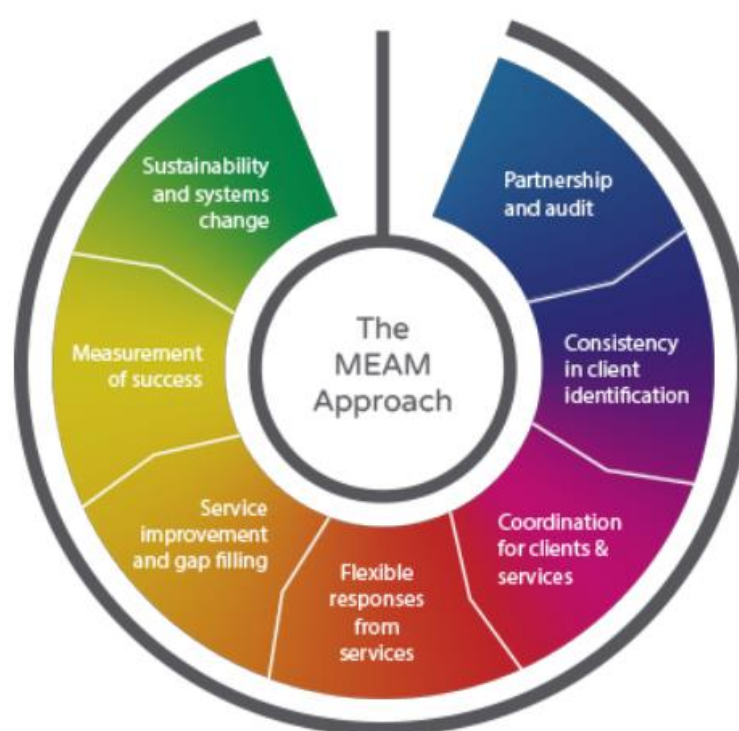
<sup>7</sup> MEAM coalition (2013). FAQs: [www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach](http://www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach)

when local services work together to develop coordinated interventions, they can transform the lives of people facing multiple disadvantage<sup>8</sup>.

MEAM describe the framework as being flexible enough to be used in any local area as a helpful tool that can bring together interested local partners, while also being rigorous enough to ensure that work developed using the MEAM Approach can be compared across local areas so that localities feel part of a national network.

The MEAM Approach includes seven core elements that should be considered by all local areas, but it does not prescribe a particular way in which these elements should be achieved. The framework is summarised in Figure 6.

*Figure 6: Seven elements of the MEAM Approach*



*Source: The MEAM Approach website (2018)<sup>9</sup>*

## 2.7 Development of the MEAM Approach network

Any local area can design and deliver work using the MEAM Approach, regardless of whether they are receiving support from the MEAM coalition.

<sup>8</sup> The MEAM Approach website: [www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach](http://www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach); FTI Consulting and Compass Lexecon (2014). Evaluation of the MEAM pilots – Update on our findings. <http://meam.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/MEAM-evaluation-FTI-update-17-Feb-2014.pdf> [Accessed 26 March 2018]

<sup>9</sup> The MEAM Approach website: [www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach](http://www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach)

However, in practice the MEAM coalition works with a fixed cohort of local areas across the country who are receiving support from the MEAM Local Networks Team and working together to share practice and provide peer support<sup>10</sup>.

There is no central funding available for local areas using the MEAM Approach; the local partnerships - formed of voluntary and statutory sector agencies - must come together to fund and deliver the local work. The “critical friend” support provided by the MEAM coalition is free of charge to the current MEAM Approach network members.

### 2.7.1 Initial roll-out

Since 2013, the MEAM coalition has supported 15 local areas across England in their work to establish a sustainable and coordinated intervention using the MEAM Approach. The MEAM Local Networks Team has provided the support to these local areas, with each supported area allocated a partnerships manager to act as a facilitator and an advisor<sup>11</sup>.

### 2.7.2 Big Lottery Fund funding and further roll-out

In 2017 the MEAM coalition received funding from the Big Lottery Fund to expand its work on the MEAM Approach.

The Big Lottery Fund money will enable the coalition to:

- Expand the number of areas involved in the MEAM Approach network.
- Bring together data from MEAM Approach and Fulfilling Lives areas to make a stronger case to government about the impact of local interventions for people facing multiple disadvantage.
- Share good practice across the MEAM Approach and Fulfilling Lives networks.
- Ensure that more individuals are empowered to tackle their problems, reach their full potential and contribute to their communities<sup>12</sup>.

As part of this work, the coalition is supporting a new cohort of 23 areas to design and deliver local interventions using the MEAM Approach. This cohort is formed of some existing MEAM areas and some new ones (see below for further information). The support from MEAM will initially run from 2017 to 2020, with a possible extension of two further years. The coalition also expects to increase the overall number of areas to 40 from 2020 onwards.

<sup>10</sup> MEAM (no date). Multiple disadvantage nationwide: a strategy for the Making Every Adult Matter coalition April 2016 – March 2022

<sup>11</sup> The MEAM coalition (2013). FAQs. [www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach](http://www.meam.org.uk/the-meam-approach)

<sup>12</sup> MEAM Approach areas: Terms and Conditions.

Each area in the MEAM Approach network receives a package of support from their local Partnerships Manager. Support packages will be agreed between the individual local area and Partnership Manager, with the Partnership Manager acting as a “critical friend” to promote a whole systems approach to tackling multiple disadvantage and promoting the voice of lived experience.

The bespoke support package includes activities such as:

- Facilitation of discussions and workshops.
- Provision of advice and guidance.
- Sharing of learning and good practice.

The MEAM coalition will also coordinate and co-produce shared learning hubs and networks at regional and national level<sup>13</sup>.

In return for support from the MEAM coalition, local areas agree to a set of terms and conditions covering partnership development, intervention design and funding, progress reporting, learning, evaluation and data sharing and communications<sup>14</sup>.

Figure 7 demonstrates the relationship between different components of the MEAM Approach network.

*Figure 7: How MEAM makes a difference at a local level*



Source: Jean Barclay Consultancy (2016)<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> MEAM Approach areas: Terms and Conditions.

<sup>14</sup> MEAM Approach areas: Terms and Conditions.

<sup>15</sup> Jean Barclay Consultancy (2016). Changing systems, changing lives: A brief review of the MEAM coalition <http://meam.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/MEAM-Review-Report-26-April-2016-FINAL.pdf> [Accessed 15/02/2018]

## 3 Local areas in the MEAM Approach network

### 3.1 Overview

This section provides an overview of the local areas participating in the MEAM Approach network as at 1 February 2018, including their geographical distribution across the country, an overview of aims and objectives in MEAM Approach areas and typologies of ways in which local areas are using the MEAM Approach. In addition, this section explores the partnership working currently being undertaken in local areas.

### 3.2 Areas participating in the MEAM Approach network

As at 1 February 2018, 23 local areas were members of the MEAM Approach network. These areas were recruited through an open and competitive Expression of Interest process which ran during the second half of 2017 and the network was formally launched in November of that year.

Figure 8 details the 23 areas participating in the MEAM Approach network as at 1 February 2018 and indicates when they began their involvement with the MEAM coalition team. These areas are shown on a map in Figure 9.

Figure 8: Areas participating in MEAM Approach network

Local area	Initial pilot area from 2010 <sup>16</sup>	Involvement started 2014-17 <sup>17</sup>	Member since Nov 2017 or later
Adur and Worthing		✓	
Basingstoke and Deane		✓	
Blackburn with Darwen		✓	
Cambridgeshire	✓		
Cornwall			✓
Coventry			✓

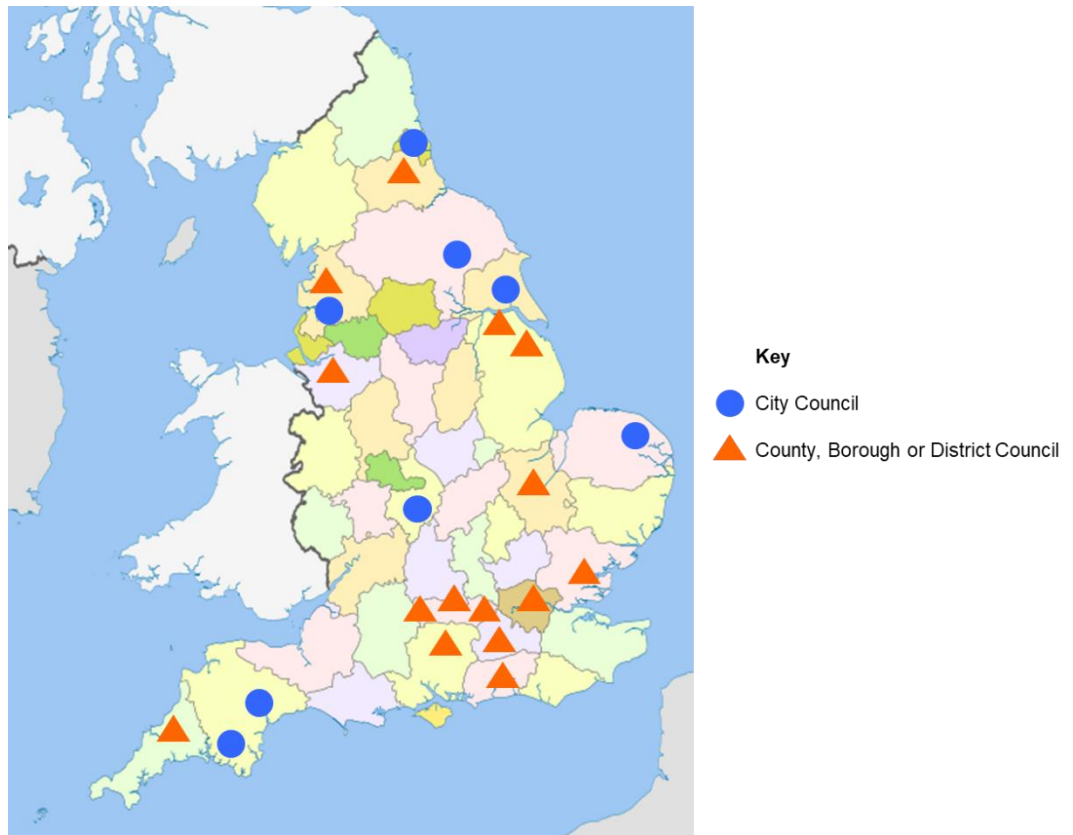
<sup>16</sup> The two other pilot areas, Derby and Somerset, are not currently involved with the MEAM Approach network.

<sup>17</sup> Five other areas were also working with the MEAM coalition at this stage but are not currently involved with the MEAM Approach network. These are: Chelmsford, Cheshire West and Chester, North Tyneside, Oxford and Wigan.



Local area	Initial pilot area from 2010 <sup>16</sup>	Involvement started 2014-17 <sup>17</sup>	Member since Nov 2017 or later
Doncaster			✓
Durham			✓
Exeter		✓	
Hackney		✓	
Halton			✓
Hull		✓	
North Lincolnshire			✓
Norwich			✓
Plymouth			✓
Preston			✓
Reading			✓
Slough			✓
Southend-on-Sea			✓
Sunderland		✓	
Surrey			✓
West Berkshire			✓
York		✓	

Figure 9: Geographical distribution of areas in MEAM Approach network



### 3.3 Aims of local work using the MEAM Approach

The MEAM coalition strategy outlines a vision that:

*“Everyone experiencing multiple needs in every local area can reach their full potential and contribute to their communities<sup>18</sup>.”*

Interviewed stakeholders from both the MEAM coalition and local areas identified aims of the MEAM Approach, and of local work using the MEAM Approach, which were aligned with this vision. All stakeholders identified one or more aim and all of the aims fell into one of three categories. Figure 10 summarises these categories.

<sup>18</sup> MEAM (no date). Multiple and complex needs nationwide: a strategy for the Making Every Adult Matter coalition April 2016 – March 2022.

Figure 10: Over-arching aims of the MEAM Approach



Intended outcomes which might be linked to these overarching aims were discussed with stakeholders in the local areas, MEAM coalition staff and people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage during both the interviews and workshops conducted during the scoping phase of the evaluation. These intended outcomes are outlined in further detail in the evaluation framework (available as a separate document).

### 3.4 Reasons for joining the MEAM Approach network

*“We wanted better joined up working and so better support for the client.”*

*Local stakeholder*

Local stakeholders reported a range of reasons for applying to join the MEAM Approach network. The most commonly-cited reason was a desire to facilitate improvements to local services, systems and culture of working, which was reported by a majority of local areas. Stakeholders in these local areas tended to report that either:

- a.) They had recognised the need to make changes locally and were looking for an approach to help them to do this by providing structure for their local work; or
- b.) They had already started to make local changes which were aligned with the MEAM Approach and felt that it would be beneficial to develop a more formal association with MEAM as a recognised nationwide coalition working on these issues, to increase the credibility of their local work and drive local engagement.

In particular, local stakeholders anticipated that being a member of the MEAM Approach network would enable them to share knowledge and good practice with the MEAM coalition and with other local areas involved in the network. They hoped that their MEAM Partnerships Manager would act as a critical friend, helping them to problem solve, maintain momentum and continuously progress with the desired local changes. They were also confident that being part of the network would provide them with opportunities to meet and share learning with other local areas who were either facing similar challenges and/or implementing similar approaches and interventions.

### 3.5 Approaches taken in local areas

The MEAM Approach is non-prescriptive and, as such, local areas are taking a variety of approaches to their local work. In addition, local areas are at different stages of developing and implementing their work using the MEAM Approach.

Capturing this difference and understanding the potential benefits and challenges of different approaches will be important for the evaluation. However, it will also be important to reflect that all local areas will be taking action in response to all seven elements of the MEAM Approach. In Figure 11 we show how some of the most common activities in local areas are linked to the MEAM Approach elements.

Figure 11: Activities in response to the seven elements of the MEAM Approach

Common activity	Partnership and audit	Consistency in client identification	Coordination for services & clients	Flexible responses from services	Service improvement & gap filling	Measurement of success	Sustainability & systems change
Strategic partnership to explore and implement system change.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Identification of a specific cohort of people as the focus of the work using the MEAM Approach.	✓	✓				✓	
Intensive support and care coordination for individuals (either newly-commissioned or an existing service).		✓	✓	✓	✓		

Common activity	Partnership and audit	Consistency in client identification	Coordination for services & clients	Flexible responses from services	Service improvement & gap filling	Measurement of success	Sustainability & systems change
Multi-agency, operational group to plan and deliver support that works for individuals.		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Planning for longer-term funding arrangements and/or embedding new approaches into business as usual	✓						✓

Below are two case studies demonstrating the variety of work being developed using the MEAM Approach. Case study 1 illustrates an approach which has taken a more operational focus as a starting point. Case study 2 provides an example of a local area which has taken a more strategic focus in its work. Whether local work takes a strategic or operational starting point tends to be the most fundamental difference in how areas are approaching their work using the MEAM Approach, and is likely to shape the nature of the work developed.

#### Case study 1:

This local area began work using the MEAM Approach in 2017 and the starting point was initially at the operational level. A coordinator was employed to work with individuals facing multiple disadvantage including homelessness, drug and alcohol use, mental health and presenting a risk to themselves or others. The coordinator helps clients to find a structured and joined up pathway through services based around their self-identified needs, enabling them to access the right support more quickly. A community tasking group of senior managers from local partner agencies oversees the work of the coordinator and ensures that local services provide flexible responses. A current focus of the area's work is to develop the strategic buy-in to ensure that practical work can lead to longer-term systemic changes in the local area.

*Case study 2:*

This local area began work using the MEAM approach in 2016. The initial driver was from a group of commissioners, focusing on an ongoing transformation of their commissioning processes, with the aim of remodelling services in collaboration with providers and clients. Senior decision makers meet monthly to discuss improving systems for people facing multiple disadvantage. A current focus of this area's work is to commission a 'whole system' set of services to support local people with experience of multiple needs.

### 3.6 Local partnerships

As part of the Terms and Conditions for participation in the MEAM Approach network, local areas have committed to the development of strong cross-sector local partnerships. All local areas currently involved in the MEAM Approach network have a multi-agency partnership in place to guide the work, with representatives from statutory and voluntary services.

#### 3.6.1 Lead partners<sup>19</sup>

Evidence from the stakeholder interviews showed that the most common lead partner in MEAM Approach areas is the local authority, which was either the single or joint lead partner in 15 local areas. The second most common type of lead partner is voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, which are either single or joint lead partner in six areas. The police are either single or joint lead partner in two local areas. In addition, two local areas reported that all partners are jointly responsible for the work using the MEAM Approach.

*Figure 12: Breakdown of partnership structures in local areas in the MEAM Approach network*

Lead partner(s)	Number of local areas
Single lead: local authority	12
Single lead: VCS	5
Single lead: police	1
Joint lead: all partners	2
Joint lead: local authority and police	2
Joint lead: local authority and VCS	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>

<sup>19</sup> In some instances local areas emphasised that the current lead partner represented an interim arrangement, and therefore might change in the future.

### 3.6.2 Size of partnerships

The size of local partnerships ranged from three organisations to 19 organisations/departments. However, a number of local areas highlighted that their partnerships are in the early stages of development, with appropriate partners still being identified and recruited. Some reported that a smaller core partnership was beneficial at their stage of development in order to maintain focus and ensure common aims. On the other hand, others reported that a wide-ranging partnership was useful in ensuring that all potentially-relevant partners were aware of the principles of the MEAM Approach and in agreement with local work using the Approach. This information is taken from the partnership's expressions of interest and will be updated as the evaluation continues.

### 3.6.3 Partner engagement

The extent to which different partner organisations are engaged in local work using the MEAM Approach varies widely from area to area. This includes both the number of organisations and the type of organisations who are meaningfully engaged. It was therefore difficult and too early to identify trends across the local areas about which types of partner tend to be most engaged. However, a minority of interviewed stakeholders did comment that partners with a primary or significant focus on homelessness are often well-engaged because in many areas the work using the MEAM Approach had begun as a homelessness-focused programme.

When discussing partners who were not currently adequately engaged with local work using the MEAM Approach, the majority of interviewed local areas and MEAM coalition staff emphasised that mental health services (and particularly statutory mental health services) were not adequately engaged. Reflecting on the possible reasons for this, stakeholders commented on:

- A tendency for mental services to feel as though they were unable to adapt to and accommodate the relatively small identified/current cohort of clients being directly supported by work using the MEAM Approach.
- Pressure that NHS mental health services are currently facing in terms of funding and demand on resources, which restricted the capacity of staff within these services to engage with the MEAM Approach partnerships.
- The long-standing issue of navigating the challenge of dual diagnosis.

In addition, a minority of stakeholders stated that it had been difficult to engage adult social care and a minority reported that criminal justice services other than the police (e.g. probation, community rehabilitation companies and prisons) were not adequately engaged.

## 4 MEAM Approach so far

### 4.1 Overview

The MEAM Approach network was launched in November 2017. This section provides details of the early successes already achieved by local areas using the MEAM Approach and by the MEAM coalition. In addition, it explores current and future challenges for MEAM, and how these might be addressed.

### 4.2 Successes achieved in local areas

The interviews with stakeholders from local areas and MEAM coalition staff provided evidence of a number of successes that have already been achieved in MEAM Approach areas. The most commonly-identified successes are discussed in sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.4.

#### 4.2.1 Bringing partners together to create strategic and/or operational groups

A majority of local areas reported that they viewed bringing together partners to create a strategic and/or operational group as one of the successes that they have achieved so far. A minority of MEAM coalition staff also raised bringing partners on board as a success in the local areas with which they were familiar.

*“Getting services to sign up has been a big thing. Getting services to own the issues, getting them to think much more widely about the services that they provide and how the services fit together - getting them thinking much more about how they can affect the outcomes for people.”*

*Local stakeholder*

Stakeholders emphasised that they had been successful in getting partners on board with the MEAM Approach who would not previously have sat around the table together, and in fostering good working relationships between these partners.

*“Getting a lot of people who we wouldn't otherwise have had in the same room together and understanding the different pressures for services and the system and how we can work through some of that and work better in the best interests of the client.”*

*Local stakeholder*

#### 4.2.2 Successful outcomes achieved with clients

Not all MEAM Approach areas are currently working with clients. However, a minority of local areas and MEAM coalition staff reported that they had achieved success with specific clients supported through interventions developed using the MEAM Approach, by supporting these clients to achieve outcomes which were important to them.



*“We managed to get someone straight into supported accommodation from prison and we wouldn't have been able to do that if he hadn't been prioritised through MEAM. His treatment started on day of release, we had the time and resource to pick him up from the prison, and now he is stable and in a stable environment.”*

*Local stakeholder*

Some stakeholders in local areas went on to add that these successes achieved by and with clients had provided local partners with additional motivation for work developed using the MEAM Approach.

#### 4.2.3 Changing the approaches of partners

A minority of local areas and MEAM coalition staff reported that local areas have seen some early successes in facilitating culture change amongst partner organisations. Examples included partner organisations beginning to work in a more coordinated and flexible way and becoming more aware of how they can work together more effectively.

#### 4.2.4 Co-production

A minority of local areas and MEAM coalition staff identified that some local areas have been able to improve their approach to co-production with people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage.

*“People with lived experience have been involved from the very start of the commissioning process and this has improved our understanding of complex needs.”*

*Local stakeholder*

While a comparatively small proportion of interviewed stakeholders considered co-production to have been a key achievement to-date in their work using the MEAM Approach, the interviews showed a strong appetite for developing co-production in the majority of local areas.

### 4.3 Successes achieved so far by the MEAM coalition

#### 4.3.1 Strong relationships and a shared vision

The majority of interviewed MEAM coalition staff reported that a major success for the team has been getting a full team in place and building cohesion, strong working relationships and a shared vision within this team.

*“We've come together really well as a team. The new people in post have been brilliant.”*

*MEAM coalition staff member*

#### 4.3.2 Strengths of the MEAM coalition team's ongoing work on the MEAM Approach

A majority of interviewed MEAM coalition stakeholders reported that they viewed the team's ongoing work in developing the MEAM Approach as a success. In particular, these stakeholders cited the ongoing work around increasing the use of co-production in local areas, increasing the focus on equality and diversity in the MEAM Approach and fostering a grassroots approach to working with local areas.

*"We've been doing a lot of work around re-thinking things internally - how we bring equalities into the work - intersectionality, discrimination, structural inequalities - building this in to our strategy. We're looking at how we can develop our strategy to further embed co-production."*

*MEAM coalition staff member*

#### 4.4 Benefits of the MEAM Approach network

##### 4.4.1 Local Networks Team

The majority of local areas reported that they found the MEAM Partnership Managers (who together form the Local Networks Team) very valuable for asking questions and accessing knowledge of good practice. These stakeholders stated that the passion, experience and strategic oversight of the Local Networks Team is useful for their local learning and development.

*"Our partnership manager has been really great – and everyone in the Local Networks Team has been very helpful and very accommodating. The workshop days have been very useful for reflection and learning."*

*Local stakeholder*

In addition, a minority of local areas commented specifically that the Local Networks Team had been very responsive, in regular contact, and had committed plenty of time to supporting them as a local area.

##### 4.4.2 Peer learning and support

The majority of local areas recognised peer learning and support as a benefit of the MEAM Approach network. Some of these local areas said that they had not yet started to work with other MEAM areas in their region but that they were aware of the opportunity and were excited to do so in the future. Others had already begun to share knowledge and learning with other MEAM Approach areas in their region, and reported that these interactions had been useful reflective exercises. In a small number of instances, local areas highlighted examples where they had been able to transfer tools and approaches already developed by another local area into their own local work, thereby being able to make quicker progress.

#### 4.4.3 Policy work undertaken at a national level

A majority of MEAM coalition stakeholders reported that they viewed the work undertaken by the MEAM Policy Team as a strength of the MEAM Approach network. Stakeholders emphasised that the Policy Team worked hard to include the voices of people with lived experience and had been successful in raising awareness of the MEAM Approach at events such as party conferences, as well as turning learning from current work into a credible national policy position.

### 4.5 Future hopes and expectations

Local areas' future hopes and expectations around their work as part of the MEAM Approach network were well-aligned with the support that the MEAM coalition team expects to provide. Both sets of stakeholders expected to work together to engage in sharing of best practice in different local areas, problem-solving, and knowledge sharing around co-production and the wider policy context of the MEAM Approach.

#### 4.5.1 Knowledge sharing

The majority of local stakeholders stated that they hoped to be able participate in knowledge-sharing both with the MEAM coalition team and with other local areas in the network. In particular, participating local stakeholders were excited about:

- Opportunities to visit other areas in the network to see how they had approached shared challenges or issues.
- Understanding how their local area was performing in comparison to others using the MEAM Approach.
- Having members of the MEAM coalition team with whom they could sense-test new ideas and receive constructive feedback.

*"We're hopeful that [the MEAM coalition team] will be a critical friend and share what's happening elsewhere."*

*Local stakeholder*

These expectations were broadly in line with the support that the MEAM coalition team envisaged offering to local areas. The majority of interviewed MEAM coalition staff emphasised that they expected to provide local areas with non-prescriptive and responsive guidance as needed, with a focus on enabling local areas to achieve their local goals. These stakeholders described their role as a 'critical friend' who could help local areas to overcome challenges, for example by linking them with other local areas who had successfully overcome these challenges or by providing advice on trouble-shooting issues such as partners who were reluctant to engage.

#### 4.5.2 Effecting change in policy

In addition, a minority of local stakeholders stated that they were looking to the MEAM coalition team for guidance on how they could get involved with effecting wider policy change based on the MEAM Approach.

*“We want that connection to MEAM as a national approach, not being insular, we want to spread the approach far and wide”*

*Local stakeholder*

MEAM coalition stakeholders also emphasised the role of the policy team. This was described as two-fold. One aspect is providing support to ensure that local areas have a good understanding of the policy environment relevant to the MEAM Approach and how this relates to practice. The second aspect was ensuring that learning and evidence from local areas’ work is used to inform national policy work.

#### 4.5.3 Developing co-production

Furthermore, a minority of local stakeholders stated that they were looking for support with developing co-production practices from the MEAM coalition team. Again, this was aligned with the support that the MEAM coalition team expect to provide. A number of interviewed MEAM coalition stakeholders referred to the newly-appointed Involvement Coordinator within the team, who will focus on working alongside local areas to develop and implement meaningful co-production.

#### 4.6 Challenges to development and delivery

Interviews with local areas and the MEAM coalition team identified several key challenges in developing and implementing work using the MEAM Approach, in addition to possible strategies to addressing these challenges. These are summarised in Figure 13.

Figure 13: Stakeholders responses to addressing current and future challenges

Challenge	Approaches to addressing challenge
<p><b>Maintaining the engagement of partners</b></p> <p>A minority of local areas and the majority of MEAM coalition staff reported that sustaining partner engagement was an ongoing challenge. Stakeholders emphasised that the recommissioning of services and the turnover of staff creates uncertainty about whether key partners would continue to be involved and potentially resulting in the loss of key staff members with knowledge and experience of using the MEAM Approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistence in encouraging partners to attend multi-agency meetings.</li> <li>• Using any staff resource to reach out to partner organisations.</li> <li>• Promoting the use of longer-term contracts to enable services to plan for future delivery and to allow time for partnerships to become well-established.</li> <li>• Where partners are in conflict, use co-production and the views of service users to bring partners together.</li> <li>• Ensure that the MEAM Approach work is framed as an approach/intervention and partnership for the areas as a whole and not as a separate “service”.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Securing future funding</b></p> <p>A minority of local areas and MEAM coalition staff reported that funding for the local MEAM Approach work is an anticipated future challenge for the area(s) in which they work. Stakeholders highlighted the need to secure permanent and long-lasting funding in order to continue work using the MEAM Approach.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage fully with the evaluation process and use the results to support future funding bids.</li> <li>• Focus on pooling funds from a range of committed partners to drive the work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Workload, time and capacity</b></p> <p>A minority of local areas and the majority of MEAM coalition staff raised issues of capacity in relation to MEAM coalition staff resources (some work part time and all across multiple areas). Local stakeholders also raised that some partners struggled to find the time to send</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and run meetings to ensure that they are not too demanding on participants’ time.</li> </ul>

Challenge	Approaches to addressing challenge
representatives to meetings relating to MEAM Approach work. This was viewed as both a current and a future challenge.	
<b>Facilitating culture change</b>  The majority of MEAM coalition staff and a minority of local areas raised achieving widespread and well-embedded culture change as a future challenge. Stakeholders emphasised that it would be a challenge for all partner organisations to work cohesively to achieve consistent culture change, as different partners will inevitably have a variety of ideas regarding what innovation should look like.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders did not provide approaches to addressing these challenges, and they remain areas for future consideration.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitating changes in the commissioning process</b>  A minority of local areas and MEAM coalition staff highlighted changing commissioning processes as an anticipated future challenge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders did not provide approaches to addressing these challenges, and they remain areas for future consideration.</li> </ul>
<b>Engaging clients and co-production</b>  A minority of local stakeholders raised that engaging clients was an ongoing challenging aspect of delivering work using the MEAM Approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders did not provide approaches to addressing these challenges, and they remain areas for future consideration. They did, however, highlight that this is an area where they are likely to seek support from the MEAM coalition.</li> </ul>

## 4.7 Conclusions

Interviews with stakeholders in local areas and in the MEAM coalition team have revealed both significant areas of strength in relation to work being conducted using the MEAM Approach, and areas for future development.

From the stakeholder interviews, we observed a good level of agreement between local areas and the MEAM coalition team regarding the aims of work being developed using the MEAM Approach.

With regards to the structure of local multi-agency partnerships, we found that they are most frequently led by local authorities, though with cross-sector representation. A strong theme emerged from stakeholders that mental health services, in particular statutory mental health services, tended to be more difficult to engage than other partner organisations.

In terms of progress made so far, the stakeholder interviews demonstrate that early successes have included bringing partners on board and working to change their approach to supporting people facing multiple disadvantage. Some local areas who had been using the MEAM Approach for a longer period of time were also able to demonstrate early successes with clients. In addition, local stakeholders were very positive about the support received from the MEAM Local Networks Team and potential future opportunities to meet and share learning with other local areas.

Current and future challenges anticipated for the MEAM Approach included sustaining partner engagement and fostering well-embedded culture and commissioning changes. In addition, ongoing funding for local work using the MEAM Approach was a concern. However, stakeholders provided approaches to addressing the majority of these challenges and the willingness to share best practice and knowledge between local areas is a promising sign for the development of best practice to address these potential issues.

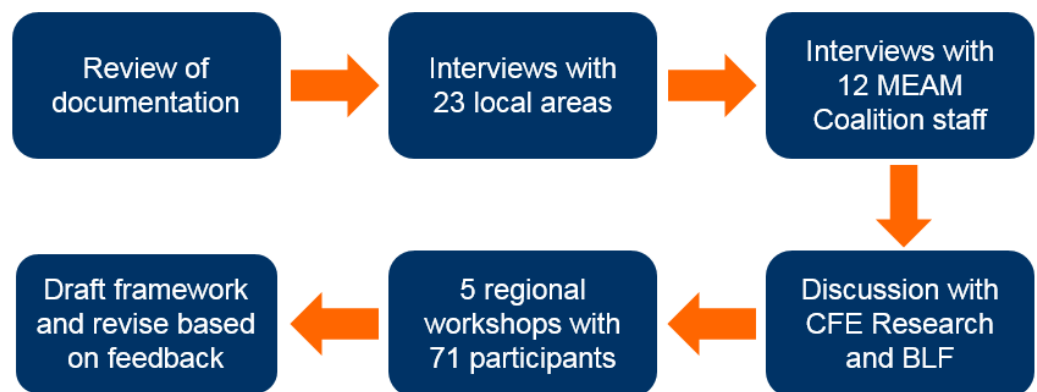
## Appendix A: methodology for scoping phase

### Overview

Figure 14 summarises the methodology for the scoping phase of the evaluation of the MEAM Approach. A more detailed description of each stage is provided below.

This scoping report is based primarily on evidence drawn from the review of documentation and from interviews with key stakeholders in local areas and in the MEAM coalition team.

*Figure 14: Methodology for scoping phase*



### Review of documentation

Cordis Bright reviewed a range of documents provided by the MEAM team and by local areas developing work using the MEAM approach, including:

- Websites and documentation produced by the MEAM coalition, including their current strategy and information on the MEAM Approach network.
- Applications to join the MEAM Approach network submitted by local areas.
- Previous evaluations of work developed using the MEAM Approach.

### Interviews with representatives from local areas

Representatives from the 23 local areas who were members of the MEAM Approach network as at February 2018 were invited to take part in telephone interviews with a Cordis Bright evaluator. A team of three evaluators were involved in conducting the interviews. All local areas who were invited to take part



completed an interview. This resulted in 23 interviews with a total of 30 stakeholders<sup>20</sup>.

Cordis Bright developed a topic guide in collaboration with the MEAM coalition team designed to help gather further information about local work using the MEAM Approach, context and progress, as well as participants' views on evaluating the MEAM Approach, including:

- The intended outcomes and impacts of the MEAM Approach and local work using it.
- The most appropriate and feasible methods to use to evaluate the MEAM Approach.
- Key stakeholders in the MEAM Approach and work related to it.
- Key audiences for the evaluation findings.

Interviews lasted approximately one hour and all responses are reported in an anonymised format within this report and the evaluation framework.

Due to time and resource constraints we were only able to conduct one interview with each local area. While multiple representatives were present in interviews for some local areas, we must be aware that in some cases the individual interviewed may not represent the views of all parties involved in delivering the MEAM Approach in that area.

### **Interviews with MEAM coalition staff**

Twelve MEAM coalition staff were also invited to take part in telephone interviews with the team of three Cordis Bright evaluators. All 12 took part.

Cordis Bright developed a topic guide in collaboration with the MEAM coalition team which was closely related to the topic guide for local areas.

Again, interviews lasted approximately one hour and all responses are reported in an anonymised format within this report and the evaluation framework.

### **Discussion with CFE research and the Big Lottery Fund**

A representative of the Big Lottery Fund took part in a phone interview with a Cordis Bright evaluator to discuss their views on the evaluation of the MEAM Approach.

In addition, Cordis Bright evaluators met with an evaluator from CFE research, who are leading on the national evaluation of Fulfilling Lives. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss how the evaluations could complement each other, particularly in terms of utilising a common data set, which would provide

---

<sup>20</sup> Some local areas fielded more than one representative for the interview.

comparators for the Fulfilling Lives areas and areas involved in the MEAM Approach network.

### Regional workshops

Five regional workshops were conducted with representatives from local areas (including staff members and experts by experience), experts by experience from other areas not currently involved in the MEAM Approach network but who had attended a regional workshop due their interest in the MEAM Approach, MEAM coalition staff and Cordis Bright evaluators.

The workshops were held in different parts of England to try to enable stakeholders from as many locations as possible to attend. The workshops were attended by 71 participants in total, with 2 further stakeholders providing written feedback instead of attending.

Cordis Bright evaluators facilitated the workshops, which were designed to:

- Present and sense test early findings from the interviews with local area representatives and MEAM coalition staff about the intended outcomes and impacts of the MEAM Approach and types of work being undertaken in local areas to achieve these outcomes and impacts.
- Begin the process of developing an evaluation framework through discussing how intended outcomes and impact might be measured and understood and which methods might best be used to capture data.
- Discuss possible challenges to implementing the evaluation and understanding the process of change in local areas.

### Circulation of draft framework and feedback phase

Cordis Bright drafted this report and the evaluation framework based on the above discussions with stakeholders and the review of documentation. These were then circulated to MEAM coalition staff, representatives from local areas (including staff members and experts by experience) and experts by experience from other areas not currently involved in the MEAM Approach network but who had attended a regional workshop due their interest in the MEAM Approach. The framework was also presented to the MEAM coalition Board. Amendments were made based on feedback from these stakeholders in order to produce a final version of the evaluation framework in May 2018.



**Cordis**Bright Limited

23/24 Smithfield Street, London EC1A 9LF

<b>Telephone</b>	020 7330 9170
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:info@cordisbright.co.uk">info@cordisbright.co.uk</a>
<b>Internet</b>	<a href="http://www.cordisbright.co.uk">www.cordisbright.co.uk</a>