

Reflection on the year:

Paul – Surrey

Good morning everyone, my name is Paul Curd and it is a pleasure to be here today.

The last year has been a really positive experience being meaningfully involved in the MEAM Approach network. On a personal level it has broadened my understanding of what it means to experience multiple disadvantage. I have learnt a lot from other people I have met with lived experience. And how each of us has a very unique experience.

On the national level and in my local MEAM area I have felt a valued part of something that feels like a radical reinterpretation of what it means to provide flexible services to those experiencing multiple disadvantage.

At the national level I have taken part in an interviewing panel for potential new MEAM areas. It was great to see so many areas recognising the necessity for a more collaborative approach to achieve better outcomes for this particularly vulnerable group of people.

I have also been involved in the co-producing of learning hubs and attended the learning hubs themselves. Not only did I learn a great deal they were fun to take part in.

Other co-productive work I have taken part in includes Policy and Influencing which is well underway. I also hope to be involved in my Local Policy and Influencing Group as well (should we be a chosen area).

Another important part of this process that includes Experts by Experience is the national evaluation. This work is being undertaken by Cordis Bright. I have learnt a lot about how research is conducted and why it is so important. It is a great way to see if what you are doing is working and more importantly how it can be improved upon.

In my local MEAM area, Surrey, I certainly feel part of the team. I sit on both the Strategic Group and the Alternative Care Working Group and am proud to have represented Surrey on 2/3 occasions so far.

We are currently running a pilot project called a Joint Response Unit. This comprises two police officers (1 male, 1 female if possible) and a paramedic specifically tasked to attend those with multiple disadvantage at points of crisis. This is already showing great promise in ensuring the right support is in place as soon as possible and improving the experience for the person.

I think it important to mention here that this came about as a direct result of a successful application to become a MEAM area and the dedication of a Darzi Fellow (Matt Webb). It would not have happened without both of these components.

What am I looking forward to today?

I am really looking forward to hearing what exciting things are happening in other MEAM areas and how they are involving Experts by Experience/Lived Experience. For I truly believe that only by shared learning and working more collaboratively will we be able to affect sustainable systems change.