

Multiple disadvantage

People facing multiple disadvantage experience a combination of problems. For many, their current circumstances are shaped by long-term experiences of poverty, deprivation, trauma, abuse and neglect. Many also face racism, sexism and homophobia. These structural inequalities intersect in different ways, manifesting in a combination of experiences including homelessness, substance misuse, domestic violence, contact with the criminal justice system and mental ill health.

Multiple disadvantage is a systemic, not an individual issue. People facing multiple disadvantage live in every area of the country. They are often failed by services and systems that focus on singular issues. This makes it harder for individuals to address their problems, lead fulfilling lives and contribute fully to their communities.

Our vision is that everyone experiencing multiple disadvantage can reach their potential and contribute fully to their communities.

Values

Our approach is:

- **Collaborative:** We model the collaboration we want to see from local services and national government. We are open, honest and reflective in everything we do.
- **Supportive and practical, yet ambitious:** We are ambitious about the change we want to see at individual, service, system and policy levels. At the same time, we recognise the constraints that people are working within and take a supportive and practical approach to all our work.
- **Inclusive and guided by experience:** We recognise that meaningful change must be based on a new balance of power between people with experience of multiple disadvantage, the people who support them, and the people who make decisions that affect them. We are committed to meaningfully coproducing our work.

About MEAM

Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) is a coalition of the national charities Clinks, Collective Voice, Homeless Link and Mind, formed in 2009 to transform services, systems and policy for people facing multiple disadvantage.

Working across government and with more than 50 local areas, we have helped to create a step-change in how local areas and national policymakers recognise and respond to people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

MEAM: ACTIVITY AND IMPACT SUMMARY

2023-24



Lankelly Chase

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www.meam.org.uk
@meamcoalition
#multipledisadvantage

Finances 2023-24

Income:
£1,218,383
Expenditure:
£1,045,171
Designated reserve:
£263,110
(at 31 March 2024)

MEAM
Making Every
Adult Matter

CLINKS

Homeless Link

Mind

How and where we work

MEAM supports local areas across England to develop effective, coordinated services that directly improve the lives of people facing multiple disadvantage and to make long-term sustainable changes to local systems. We use our shared knowledge and practical experience from this work to influence policy at a national and local level.

We run the national MEAM Approach network (currently formed of 40 local areas) and hold the support contract for the Government and The National Lottery Community Fund's Changing Futures programme.

We provide a range of support to MEAM Approach areas, including one-to-one advice, free training, learning events and online resources. We also offer training, consultancy and systems leadership support on a paid-for basis to local areas within and outside the network.

Strategic aims

For the period 2021-25, our work is divided into three strategic aims:

- **Involvement and Inclusion:** We are committed to coproducing our work and supporting local areas to do the same. We take an actively intersectional and anti-racist approach to multiple disadvantage, enabling services and systems that can support everyone experiencing multiple disadvantage.
- **Partnerships and systems:** We use our expertise to help local partnerships across the country transform services and systems for people facing multiple disadvantage. As a result, local areas using the MEAM Approach see measurable improvements in the wellbeing of individuals and statistically significant reductions in rough sleeping, hospital admissions, arrests and nights spent in prison.
- **Policy and influence:** A supportive national policy environment can incentivise local action and help to ensure that people get the support they need. We use our experience from local areas to influence policymakers at the local and national level.

Activity and impact highlights:

TRAINING

Our Foundation Training provides free-to-access quarterly training for the MEAM Approach network. By the end of the year we had run six rounds, reaching attendees from 23 MEAM Approach areas.

SUMMIT

The MEAM Approach Network Annual Conference was held in London, attracting over 180 delegates. 93% rated it as "Good" or "Very Good" and 87% said they would apply learning to their working practice.

2022 COHORT

We continued to provide direct support to the ten areas which joined the MEAM Approach network in 2022, helping them to strengthen local partnerships, implement new models of support and tackle system barriers.

PAID TRAINING

We refreshed our training modules on key topics including: Understanding disadvantage, Trauma-informed and strength-based approaches, Systems Thinking, and Coproduction. We delivered training in a range of local areas, improving skills and supporting service delivery.

CHANGING FUTURES

We provided direct, bespoke support to the 15 areas that are part of the Government and TNLCF's Changing Futures programme. We held regular meetings of the Systems Change Together Forum and facilitated two sets of regional learning events. Our support enables local areas to create change at individual, service and system levels.

EQUITY

We held regular space for our team and the network to discuss racism and multiple disadvantage. We commissioned Kusoma to provide direct support to two areas in the MEAM Approach network to explore racial equity in their MEAM Approach work. A report was published in 2024.

SYSTEMS CONSULTANCY

We evaluated the bespoke Systems Intervention support we have provided to nine local areas over the last twelve months. In each we have helped to address specific challenges in local systems and improve cross-sector engagement. We have been commissioned to provide further bespoke support to a range of areas.

COPRODUCTION

We provided regular support to local areas across the network to embed coproduction in their local work. We continued to support and expand the MEAM Expert Group. We launched our 'Rivers of Coproduction' tool for local areas.

SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP

Throughout the year we ran a range of Systems Leadership Programmes (commercial and grant-funded), supporting individuals from a wide set of professional backgrounds to develop the skills for leading across local systems.

ONLINE COMMUNITY

We celebrated our online community platform reaching 600 members, representing 41 out of 42 MEAM Approach areas.

ELECTION

We launched Future Focus, our policy commission on the future of multiple disadvantage policy to inform the 2024 election. We invited a range of cross-party and other voices to contribute to an essay collection, which was published in spring 2024.