North East Multiple Needs and Exclusion Forum

Terms of Reference

Introduction

The NE Multiple Needs & Exclusions Forum originally developed out of the Regional Homelessness Group’s Task & Finish Group on Multiple Needs. The main purpose of the group was to meet to share experiences and approaches as well as receive monitoring reports about funded projects. The funding for the projects has now ended and multiple needs work across the NE has grown. In September 2015 it was agreed that Clinks and Homeless Link would support the forum as part of their work of the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) Coalition. The MEAM Coalition is a group of national charities who came together to try and improve outcomes for people with multiple needs. More information about MEAM can be found at www.meam.org.uk

Definition of Multiple Needs and Exclusions

People facing multiple needs and exclusions are in every community in the North East:

- They experience several problems at the same time, such as mental ill health, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, offending and family breakdown. They may have one main need complicated by others, or a combination of lower level issues which together are a cause for concern. These problems often develop after traumatic experiences such as abuse or bereavement. They live in poverty and experience stigma and discrimination.

- They have ineffective contact with services. People facing multiple needs usually look for help, but most public services are designed to deal with one problem at a time and to support people with single, severe conditions. As a result, professionals often see people with multiple needs (some of which may fall below service thresholds) as ‘hard to reach’ or ‘not my problem’. For the person seeking help this can make services seem unhelpful and uncaring. In contrast to when children are involved, no one takes overall responsibility.

- And they are living chaotic lives. Facing multiple problems that exacerbate each other, and lacking effective support from services, people easily end up in a downward spiral of mental ill health, drug and alcohol problems, crime and homelessness. They become trapped, living chaotic lives where escape seems impossible, with no one offering a way out.

Purpose of the group

- To bring together people from the four sectors (homelessness, criminal justice, mental health and substance misuse) in order to help develop the work across the NE to better serve people facing multiple needs and exclusions including by:
  - Sharing experience of developing multiple needs work
Bring together the voluntary and community sector and statutory sector to discuss issues and offer potential solutions, as they arise.

- Highlighting good practice from the NE to be shared more widely
- Gather the views of service users through practitioners to develop an action plan to influence policy through the MEAM Coalition

Membership

Membership is open to any practitioner working in the multiple and complex needs field, from the voluntary and community sector, statutory sector, researchers and academics.

For further information contact Natalie Maidment, Clinks NE Development Officer, natalie.maidment@clinks.org