



PRESS NOTICE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 09:30 Tuesday 13 March 2012

Leading charities welcome new Government strategy to help society's most excluded individuals

A group of leading charities has today welcomed the Social Justice Strategy and its focus on better coordinated support for individuals facing a combination of problems such as mental ill health, substance misuse, homelessness and contact with the criminal justice system.

Social Justice: transforming lives, launched today by the Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, makes clear that the government's vision for social justice and a 'second chance society' extends to this group of individuals facing multiple needs and exclusions, as well as to families.

Without the right support, this group suffer from negative outcomes; communities are affected by crime and anti-social behaviour; local services are disrupted for other users; and there are large bills for the public purse through frequent arrest, prison sentences and ambulance call outs.

Revolving Doors Agency and the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coalition - formed of Clinks, DrugScope, Homeless Link and Mind – are pleased to see clear references in the strategy for better coordination of local services to support these individuals:

"We know that co-ordinated, outcome-focused support delivers better results for a person's life chances in the long term... We recognise that more can be done to support those who are least well served by current approaches. Through this strategy and the work that follows, we want to encourage local areas to design and commission interventions that are better coordinated and that deliver multiple outcomes." Social Justice: Transforming Lives - paragraphs 226-227

Commenting Oliver Hilbery, Project Director, Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) said:

We are encouraged to see such a clear message about supporting society's most excluded individuals in today's Social Justice Strategy. We know that a small investment in the coordination of existing local services can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of the most excluded individuals in a local area, and government support for this approach is welcome.

Today's statement is the first step. We will continue to work with government as they develop the structures that can drive the provision of excellent services for this group in local areas.

Dominic Williamson, Chief Executive, Revolving Doors Agency said:

“We are pleased that the government has recognised that many individuals facing multiple problems are not living in family units and are often left out by current initiatives. We agree that more must be done to support them. Getting services to work better for these men and women is essential to achieving greater social justice. An essential part of this will be to improve accountability for this group and to target resources more effectively in local areas.”

The Social Justice Strategy demonstrates important progress in the first of five government actions needed to enable communities to better respond to this group, as outlined by MEAM and Revolving Doors in *Turning the Tide: A Vision Paper for multiple needs and exclusions*, published last year.⁽⁴⁾ Revolving Doors and MEAM look forward to working with the government to achieve all five actions and to ensure that the delivery of the social justice agenda is effective in turning around the lives of individuals experiencing multiple needs and exclusions.

Notes to the editor:

- (1) **Social Justice: transforming lives** was launched today by the Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP.
- (2) **Revolving Doors Agency** is a charity working across England to change systems and improve services for people with multiple problems, including poor mental health, who are in contact with the criminal justice system. Revolving Doors Agency works with prisons, the police and partners across England. We also run a national service user forum of people with direct experience of the issues. www.revolving-doors.org.uk
- (3) **Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM)** is a coalition of four national charities – Clinks, DrugScope, Homeless Link and Mind – formed to influence policy and services for adults facing multiple needs and exclusions. Together the charities represent over 1,600 frontline organisations working in the criminal justice, drug treatment, homelessness and mental health sectors. www.meam.org.uk; www.clinks.org; www.drugscope.org.uk; www.homeless.org.uk; www.mind.org.uk
- (4) **Turning the Tide: A Vision Paper for multiple needs and exclusions** was launched in September 2011. It outlines our vision: that in every local area people experiencing multiple needs and exclusions are supported by effective, coordinated services, with small teams helping people access the support they need and all agencies being flexible in their responses to this group. It argues that a new approach is needed from national government to make this the norm and sets out five building blocks for this new approach:
 - Communicating a clear message that tackling multiple needs and exclusions is government priority.
 - Defining and identifying people experiencing multiple needs and exclusions.
 - Creating accountability, leadership and transparency.
 - Making outcomes and commissioning work for this group.
 - Getting the finances right in local areas.

This document is available at

<http://www.meam.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/turning-the-tide.pdf>

- (5) For more information, interviews, or comments please contact Anna Page at Revolving Doors: anna.page@revolving-doors.org.uk 07983 612 728 or Jesse Donaldson at MEAM jesse.donaldson@meam.org.uk 020 7012 1417.
- (6) **People facing multiple needs and exclusions** are in every community in Britain.
- **They experience several problems at the same time**, such as mental ill health, homelessness, drug and alcohol misuse, offending, and family breakdown. These problems often develop after traumatic experiences such as abuse or bereavement.
 - **They have ineffective contact with services.** People with 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. This leads to people not getting the help that they need.
 - **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.