

## **Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) pilot project update**

### **Introduction**

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.

Oxford was selected as one of the pilot areas for this project in spring 2013. No external funding is provided for the project, but expert advice and support is offered through the MEAM. The lead organization for the project is Oxford City Council with many different partner agencies involved.

The project is working towards the suggested 'MEAM Approach', which consist of 6 'steps' for developing a coordinated approach: Partnership and audit; Consistency in client identification; Coordination for clients and services; Flexible response from services; Service improvement and gap filling; Measurement of success; Sustainability and systems change.

Due to other commitments the start of the pilot was delayed in Oxford. Client work started in August 2014.

What has happened this far:

- **Partnership and audit:**- A large group of stakeholders from all the four MEAM areas have been involved in the project from the very beginning. This has now been named the Governance Group and this continues to meet regularly in order to review and steer the pilot. The next meeting will take place 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015. The national MEAM team also attend the meetings; they provide advice, guidance and are able to share the different approaches from other projects.
- **Consistency in client identification:**- A rigorous client identification process took place in spring 2014, which the Governance Group discussed in detail. A large number of clients were initially identified and data from that client group was subsequently refined to have a more focused client group. The project is currently working a total of 17 clients (the project started with 21 clients). There is scope within the project to increase the number of MEAM clients to 25 and this will be discussed at the Governance Group meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> January.
- **Coordination for clients and services:**- Most MEAM areas in the county are currently operating a model where they have funded and appointed a MEAM coordinator to initially get the project off the ground and to coordinate services and break down unnecessary barriers.

Appointing a coordinator has not been done in Oxford as it is financially unviable. It was also felt that a 'coordinator model' would bring about another layer of support when in actual fact we were trying to simplify the structure of support services. As a result we came up with a different approach, which keeps the focus on the clients and allows their current lead Support worker to spend more time on finding the most appropriate solutions. The approach also aims to focus on adapting the way that services engage with MEAM clients.

Some funding has been put aside by Oxford City Council in order for services to be able to claim overtime for their staff to work in different (and more intensive) ways with client. A small personalisation fund of £250 for each MEAM client is also available in order to help with motivation, encouragement and engagement. One of the reasons for

introducing this approach is that it is believed that this will produce a more sustainable model and hopefully see a continuous 'MEAM approach' in all services in Oxford beyond the pilot period. This approach has been of interest to other areas setting up MEAM also.

- A MEAM Operational Group, made up of support workers from all the organisations working with MEAM clients meet every month in order to 'case conference' each of the MEAM clients. Where a clear block to progress is identified by the group, the client will be referred to the Executive Steering Group what will endeavor to solve the problem by ensuring services are flexible.
  - Three clients have thus far been referred to the Executive Steering Group
  - The MEAM Operational Group meetings in themselves have produced some very good outcomes for clients and issues that may have resulted due to lack of knowledge between services have been resolved.
  - A general theme for many of the MEAM clients is that the main block to progress is their chaotic and complex nature, rather than any systemic blocks – at present.
  - Coordination of the MEAM pilot as a whole has been taken up by the Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Team, Oxford City Council, due to not appointing a specific coordinator. Some administrative help was promised by another service earlier in the year, but it turned out that this would not be possible.
- **Flexible responses from services:-** Statutory services in Oxford are very committed to the MEAM pilot and members from all four MEAM areas are part of the MEAM Executive Steering Group. This group is tasked with 'unblocking' blocks for progress for MEAM clients where the MEAM Operational Group has identified these. An example of this is making sure mental health assessments and assessments for accommodation could take place for one of the clients whilst in prison in order to prevent, as much as possible, the client from having to rough sleep upon release.
- **Service improvement and gap filling; Measurement of success; Sustainability and systems change:-** The MEAM pilot in Oxford has not arrived at these 'steps' yet, but these will be addressed when an assessment/review is taking place towards the end of March 2015. This assessment/review will help influence if and how the project should move forward and how key learning can be shared in order to provide better outcomes for all people who keep 'falling through the gaps'.

What happens next:

- **Governance Group meeting** is taking place on 7<sup>th</sup> January in order to make some key decisions on next steps and future developments of the MEAM pilot. Feedback from all services involved in the project this far will be presented and discussion facilitated by the MEAM national coordinator, Ollie Hibery.