



PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTL 00:01 Tuesday 29 September 2009

New coalition urges politicians to act for the most vulnerable

Today a coalition of four leading charities will call on the government and opposition parties to prevent the most vulnerable in society from falling between the gaps in care services.

The Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) coalition, made up of Clinks, DrugScope, Homeless Link and Mind and supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, will say that services often struggle to help people with multiple care needs and that current failings result in inefficient use of public funds and engrained social exclusion that is costly to the individual and society as a whole.

Making Every Adult Matter is today setting out a four point manifesto that seeks to improve the way people with multiple needs are treated and supported. It calls for a Green Paper on multiple needs and for the next government to create a framework in which all local authorities, criminal justice agencies, health services and the voluntary sector must actively cooperate in solving the problem, rather than simply shifting responsibility elsewhere.

People with multiple needs experience a combination of issues including substance misuse, mental health problems, homelessness and criminal behaviour, but individual services are often not set up to help people who have more than one problem. Differing priorities and a lack of coordination can mean that people with multiple needs are left to 'recycle' around the system, being passed from one service to the next, without ever receiving the overall help they need to make meaningful changes to their lives. Although there has been progress on addressing social exclusion in recent years, specific targets across government still don't include this group, compounding their exclusion.

To support the manifesto the MEAM coalition is committing itself to supporting a programme of locally based service development, building on the work that is already underway across its 1600 frontline member agencies.

Oliver Hilbery, the MEAM Project Director, said:

“In every local area, councils, services and the police can list individuals who face multiple needs and exclusions by name. But differing priorities and a lack of coordination can mean that they are passed from service to service, without ever getting the overall help that they need.

“Today’s manifesto is a call to change that for good. A national framework that focuses on greater local cooperation would prevent people from falling through the gaps in services, improve our communities and ultimately be more cost-effective.

“We have promised to tackle multiple needs and exclusions by working with our frontline agencies. We are now calling on politicians to make their promise and commit to the manifesto.”

Andrew Barnett, Director of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, said:

“The Foundation is committed to assisting individuals to fulfil their potential and contribute to society and this is particularly important for those who currently live at the margins of our communities. We are therefore pleased to be supporting the work of the Making Every Adult Matter coalition.

“The launch of the four-point manifesto presents a real opportunity for government policy to support practical work on multiple needs and exclusions and is a basis from which we can further develop local service responses in the future.”

ENDS

NOTES:

- (1) The report *Making Every Adult Matter: A four point manifesto for tackling multiple needs and exclusions* is launched today. Embargoed copies are available on request.
- (2) Interviews with MEAM and possible case studies can be arranged via the MEAM Project Director - Oliver Hilbery - on 07810 867 190. Alternatively please contact the media and communications teams in one of the four MEAM organisations (see below for details)
- (3) Full information on the MEAM coalition and its work are available at <http://www.meam.org.uk>

- (4) Making Every Adult Matter is supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, a charitable foundation with cultural, educational and social interests. Its purpose is to help enrich and connect the experiences of individuals in the UK and Ireland and secure lasting and beneficial change. It has a special interest in those who are most disadvantaged. <http://www.gulbenkian.org.uk>
- (5) People suffering from multiple needs and exclusions are defined by fitting three criteria. They:
- Experience a combination of issues that impact adversely on their lives
 - Are routinely excluded from effective contact with services they need
 - Tend to lead chaotic lives that are costly to society.
- (6) The manifesto launch will take place at two fringe events at the Labour and Conservative party conferences. Journalists attending the conferences are welcome to attend. Please register your interest with the MEAM Project Director oliver.hilbery@meam.org.uk

Labour: Tuesday 29 September 2009, 8am
Consort Room, The Grand Hotel, Brighton (secure zone)
Breakfast provided.

Speakers include:

- Phil Hope MP (confirmed)
- Eilias Lawlor, New Economics Foundation
- Daniel Mitchell, Revolving Doors Agency National Service User Forum
- Representatives from Making Every Adult Matter

Conservative: In partnership with the Centre for Social Justice.
Wednesday 7 October 2009, 8am
Manchester Central, Exchange Rooms 2&3, Manchester (secure zone)
Breakfast provided.

Speakers include:

- Christian Guy, The Centre for Social Justice
- Daniel Mitchell, Revolving Doors Agency National Service User Forum
- Representatives from Making Every Adult Matter

- (7) The media/communications teams in the four organisations can be contacted at:

Clinks:

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DrugScope:

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Homeless Link:

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