

North Tyneside Making Every Adult Matter

Overview

The MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter) service works with chronically excluded people who, due to chaotic lifestyles and multiple need, have difficulty accessing services and are often excluded from services because of past or current behaviour or risks. They tend to use expensive emergency and crisis services rather than having effective contact with planned services. The work was implemented as a pilot initially, but has now been integrated into mainstream services.

The Council and a range of partners have collaboratively developed a robust integrated service for people with multiple needs who often fail to meet inclusion criteria or whose previous behaviour or lack of engagement deems them ineligible for services. Typical needs include homelessness, substance misuse, offending, mental ill health, family breakdown and chaotic lifestyles. Multi-faceted need heightens vulnerability. The service supports these people in a productive way, addressing the negative cyclical nature of their lives.

A co-ordination approach is used with customers. A Co-ordinator is funded by the Council and strategic and operational panels comprising of a wide range of partners from statutory and voluntary sectors operate the service.

Operational panels meet fortnightly to discuss cases, share information to minimise risk, agree actions and support tailored to the individual. This approach blends services with appropriate skills to meet need and share risk and responsibility in a multi-agency way. The risk of an incident occurring due to lack of information sharing is minimised, an issue often highlighted in Serious Case Reviews. The strategic board highlights gaps in services that then feed into commissioning plans and also facilitates services “flexing” from usual operating practice where needed to meet individuals’ needs in the most appropriate way.

The operational panel includes a wide range of partners from statutory and voluntary sectors, and involvement of CVS partners at both operational and strategic level has allowed the service to develop flexible approaches that react more responsively to this group of customers.

Impact

- 31 clients engaged with MEAM in 2014/15. Many were described as 'chaotic' at initial engagement point and had achieved an increased level of stability following this engagement. The service is described as the main vehicle for enabling these people to access services.
- Further 46 people supported with brief interventions.
- An average per person 44% reduction in risk scoring using a recognised tool following MEAM intervention.
- 330% increase in the number of people accessing supported accommodation.
- 114% increase in the number of people accessing floating support.
- Reduction in arrests across the cohort from 137 in the year prior to MEAM to 84 post intervention (estimated cost saving of £88,404).
- Agencies have a greater understanding of the needs of customers, and a greater understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities.
- Greater partnership working, including between service providers who previously competed for business. Understanding how they could complement each other's services to meet the needs of individuals has really strengthened this aspect.
- Greater confidence to work with more challenging clients, knowing that the work has the backing of a multi-professional team and that an individual agency always has a place to discuss concerns and issues to seek alternative solutions. Agencies have become less risk averse.
- Agencies willing to flex away from usual operating models where needed to provide tailored support, and joint working on cases between separate agencies to match up the optimal skill set and resource.
- Optimal use of existing local resources.

