

07. Improving access to services

Overview

- A key challenge for Fulfilling Lives is to **address the lack of joined-up approaches** and collaborative working across sectors.
- **No Wrong Door (NWD)** models aim to produce a more joined-up system of support for people with multiple needs – where a person presents they will be assisted to access appropriate services. **It is more than simply signposting.**
- Partnerships have also trialled a single assessment of need and / or a record of beneficiary details and service engagement **kept in a single place for several service providers to use.**
- These approaches have the potential to **enhance beneficiary experiences of services** and improve communication across organisations.
- The potential **size and complexity** of networks needed for a NWD model is a challenge. It might be more effective to pilot the approach with a small number of organisations and grow it from there.
- It would be beneficial to revisit this approach once more progress has been made. **Partnerships play a key role** in supporting the development of flexible approaches to improving access to services and securing the support of partners and it will be important to consider the implementation and impact of this over the longer term.

What is it?

There is a lack of joined-up approaches and collaborative working across different sectors for people with multiple and complex needs. Fulfilling Lives partnerships aim to address this. There are many reasons why people with multiple and complex needs may struggle to get the support they need, but a repeated complaint is that are often asked to ‘tell their story’ (explain their experiences and issues) by every organisation and worker they interact with. This can mean revisiting traumas and the impacts of this. Telling their story can take time and requires trust to be built. Fulfilling Lives partnerships have adopted some specific approaches to improving access to services by addressing these frustrations.

No Wrong Door (NWD) models aim to produce a more joined-up system of support for people with multiple needs. The idea of NWD is that wherever a person with multiple needs turn up, they will be assisted to access appropriate services. This can only be achieved by creating a large network of agencies collaborating so that individuals experience a more seamless service. The model should reduce the problem of potential beneficiaries feeling discouraged and disengaging entirely when an organisation they approach is unable to help them. The model is more than simply signposting and requires services to take a more active approach in engaging with other agencies.

Similar solutions may be created to allow beneficiaries to tell their story once and provide a single assessment of need that can be shared and used across a range of organisations.

How are Fulfilling Lives partnerships delivering this?

Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool are working towards a NWD model and each have a slightly different concept of what it means in practice. For example, the NWD model in Birmingham also involves organisations signing up to a common set of standards and there is a plan for developing the technology for sharing information to support the model. Birmingham and Manchester are working towards wider systemic change as a result of their NWD approach, involving other services directly. Liverpool in contrast is using this approach solely with individuals referred to Fulfilling Lives (see box below).

Manchester and Bristol are seeking to reduce the number of times that beneficiaries are asked to provide information. The team at Bristol's Golden Key programme have been working to develop a single housing assessment of need that is trusted and accepted across key service providers. Inspiring Change Manchester have developed a data sharing platform called GM-Think, which provides a single place to record details of beneficiary engagement with a range of different service providers.

Liverpool Waves of Hope's 'No Wrong Doors' approach

No wrong doors means that no-one who approaches Liverpool Waves of Hope will be turned away. If an individual is ineligible for support from Waves of Hope they are redirected to another form of support. There are three elements in place to help ensure this:

- A 'drop in' support service for beneficiaries who no longer require the intensive support provided by Waves of Hope.
- Referrals to alternative support, including floating support, offender-based services, rough sleeping services and accommodation-based services.
- Delivery partner collaboration and adaptability to ensure beneficiaries get the support they need rather than being classified as ineligible for help.

What do the evaluations tell us?

Local evaluations have focussed on learning more about the process of developing systems that improve access to services for beneficiaries and how challenges might be overcome. Systems take time to design and implement and this is a significant learning process for partnerships. Evidence on NWD is based on interviews with key partnership staff, external stakeholders, peer mentors and experts by experience, as well as case studies of beneficiaries and reviews of relevant documentation.

What is the evidence of impact?

There is some evidence from staff and stakeholder interviews that NWD schemes have the potential to have a positive impact, although as stated above, schemes are still in the early stages. Stakeholders appear generally supportive of the theory behind a NWD approach and can see the potential value. People with lived experience in one area

saw their local information sharing system as being fundamental to addressing the systemic barriers to services they had experienced.

The potential impact of No Wrong Door models on:

...individuals

NWD appears to have helped **widen the range of support services that organisations are aware of** and can refer people to

This can mean that there is a **reduction in the risk of harm in the community** as beneficiaries can be referred to support more expediently

People with lived experience felt that GM-Think gives them **greater control and influence** over the records kept on them

...wider systems

Organisations can have **more accurate and up to date information** on the services that individuals had used

Communication across organisations participating has improved, with Birmingham reporting that it had made referral pathways 'slicker'

They have actually got someone to advocate on their behalf who they can trust and they know will be there for them. Whereas before if they went to a service and were knocked back or signposted somewhere else they would most likely give up and not bother.

Stakeholder, Birmingham Changing Futures Together¹

[GM-Think] has been a big positive, it gives one story and I can contribute to my own data.

Core group member, Inspiring Change Manchester²

¹ ABIC Ltd (2017) A Review of the Impact of Birmingham Changing Futures Together on Systems Change. Prepared for BVSC

² Centre for Local Economic Strategies (2016) *Inspiring Change Manchester Systems Change Report – Phase 2* Inspiring Change Manchester

Key learning

Both Manchester and Birmingham have ambitious visions for their NWD model, and have experienced challenges in implementing it. Liverpool's model is more focused on supporting beneficiaries who approach Liverpool Waves of Hope, rather than other service providers in the area, and as a result perhaps unsurprisingly does not appear to have faced the same challenges.

- NWD models and information-sharing platforms can be complex and therefore **take time to develop**. The context in which solutions are being developed is constantly changing - for example, staff changes, budget reductions, organisational priority shifts. Each time new members join a network they must be brought up to speed and often have their own ideas.
- There can be significant **complex legal and technological issues** – for example, agreeing data-sharing protocols and ensuring pre-existing systems 'speak to each other' in order to pool the data in a central place. Organisations need to trust each other and overcome concerns about the financial and technical implications of switching systems.
- NWD models also **require a certain level of resourcing** from participating organisations. Staff must dedicate longer periods of time to supporting people to access other services.
- A particular challenge is the **potential size and complexity** of networks needed. In order for there really to be 'no wrong door' all potential 'doors' need to be brought into the network.

A more pragmatic approach recommended by one evaluator might be to pilot the approach with a limited number of partners to prove its effectiveness before 'selling' the concept to a wider area. Another partnership evaluation suggested that the design be revisited from the beneficiary perspective – which organisations are most important to them and would they want to be involved in an NWD. The network could then be built around this, making it more manageable.

Further, evaluations illustrate that, while referral pathways may be improved, NWD does not address more fundamental issues about the availability and quality of support provided. Long waiting times are still faced if the services beneficiaries are referred to do not have capacity to take on new people. The NWD approach alone does not necessarily create capacity in the system or lead to the availability of the longer-term support that many need.

How might this contribute to systems change?

Improving access to services has the fundamental aim of changing wider systems to make them more receptive to and appropriate for people with multiple and complex needs. All partnerships who have implemented and utilised No Wrong Door or other information sharing systems highlighted what they had achieved in terms of system change in a relatively short period of time, suggesting the significant potential of these to transform access to support for anyone seeking help. However they also highlight the challenges faced in attempting wider systemic change.

Use of the GM-Think platform has been extended beyond the Fulfilling Lives partnership in Greater Manchester to include delivery organisations and volunteers receiving Manchester City Council's Homelessness Prevention Grant. Further, people with lived experience reported that organisations using the GM-Think system were able to provide more effective support as a result. Liverpool's evaluation reports that the NWD approach appears to be gaining wider traction, particularly across the health and social care sector, and they cite a number of local strategic plans that identify the NWD approach as a priority or beneficial. This provides a good basis on which to build.

Birmingham Changing Futures Together has an ambitious plan involving 18 organisations working together more closely. The evaluation of this identifies a number of untested assumptions that underpin the effective working of the model. This includes the assumption that all frontline staff will be involved in every member organisation, that they will be able to triage effectively, have up-to-date knowledge of services content and capacity and that they will always work to the integrity of the concept. It is perhaps unsurprising then that creating such a network has been challenging, as it requires maintaining hundreds of nodes with different employment policies, legislative responsibilities, cultures and operating systems. Changing systems in what may be perceived to be a radical way will take time and effort from all parties involved, but has the potential to be transformative.

What next?

Evaluation reports suggest that the NWD and information sharing solutions have potential to address some key concerns of people with multiple needs and improve access to services beyond Fulfilling Lives by encouraging collaboration. As yet there is very little evidence of impact. Local evaluation reports highlight substantial challenges in delivering such approaches. It would be beneficial to revisit this topic in a few years' time to re-assess progress, effectiveness and impact and to gather potentially valuable learning on how best to make such models work, particularly in terms of systems change. Future evaluations should aim to monitor progress and capture learning on

how best to create this types of systems change, and how challenges can be overcome, as well as evidencing the benefits.

Further reading

ABIC Ltd (2017) A Review of the Impact of Birmingham Changing Futures Together on Systems Change. Prepared for BVSC

Birmingham Changing Futures Together (2017) *Year 3 Annual Report* BVSC

Centre for Local Economic Strategies (2016) *Inspiring Change Manchester Systems Change Report – Phase 2* Inspiring Change Manchester

Inspiring Change Manchester (no date) *The No Wrong Door Compact for Manchester*

Ipsos MORI and Institute of Psychology Health and Society, University of Liverpool (2016) *Liverpool Waves of Hope Evaluation Year 1: Evaluation report* Liverpool Waves of Hope

Ipsos MORI and Institute of Psychology Health and Society, University of Liverpool (2017) *Liverpool Waves of Hope Evaluation Year 2: Evaluation report* Liverpool Waves of Hope