



Summary report

Key findings from the
Fulfilling Lives programme

**Evaluation of
Fulfilling Lives:**
Supporting
people with
multiple needs

CFE Research

This is a summary of key messages from the 2019 series of briefings reporting data and insight from the evaluation of the Fulfilling Lives programme.

The Fulfilling Lives programme defines multiple needs as experience of two or more of homelessness, offending, substance misuse and mental ill-health. In 2015 it was estimated that there were at least 58,000 people in England annually who had contact with homelessness, criminal justice and substance misuse services.¹ Many also had experience of mental ill-health. Since 2014 Fulfilling Lives, working in just 12 areas of England, has supported over 3,400 people and has seen high demand for services across these areas. Over half of Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries experience all four of the defining needs, and nearly all have experienced at least three.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential. People with experience of multiple needs have expertise, skills and assets to offer, but many are not getting the help that they need. Fulfilling Lives projects take a personalised approach, working alongside mainstream services to better coordinate the support that people receive. Key features of the programme that we know make a difference to beneficiaries include persistent and ongoing support, free of short-term time limits; small case-loads for workers, allowing the time to build personal relationships based on trust; and providing holistic support with a focus on beneficiaries' priorities.

1. Why we need to invest in multiple needs

A lack of effective support for this group results in substantial costs to the public purse, serious social and economic impacts and a tragic waste of human life.

The current system is not working for people with multiple needs. Many interactions with public services are negative and avoidable. In their first three months with Fulfilling Lives, 27 per cent attended A&E at least once, 14 per cent were evicted from a tenancy and 28 per cent were arrested at least once.

When people first join the Fulfilling Lives programme they are each using, on average, over £25,000 in public services per year. This is an underestimate as it does not include all types of interactions with public services or the cost of delivering support programmes. Across all Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries this equals over £88.5million. This is disproportionately high when compared with public spending on similar services for the population generally. The costs of multiple needs affect a wide range of agencies and organisations, including HM Courts and Tribunals Service, HM Prison and Probation Service, local police forces, NHS Trusts and Care Commissioning Groups.

In addition, there are serious social and economic impacts, such as homelessness, crime and anti-social behaviour, not to mention the tragic waste of human life and potential. 1 in 20 beneficiaries have died since the start of the programme. The average age of those who died was 43 for men and 39 for women (compared to 76 and 81 respectively in the general population).²

Dealing with complex needs takes time and requires long-term investment. Yet after just one year, the evidence suggests that Fulfilling Lives reduces negative behaviours and misdirected demand for services. This creates the opportunity to use resources differently; the initial annual reduction in service use is worth at least £2,100 per beneficiary per year. Across all Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries this equals a potential saving of £7.3million per year.

Read the full report here: www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/why-we-need-to-invest-in-multiple-needs-new-briefing-out-now



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2. Understanding multiple needs



It is important that the particular needs and concerns of women are taken into account when designing services.

People with multiple needs are diverse and should not be seen as a uniform group. It is vital that those designing services for people with multiple needs recognise this and take steps to understand their potential service users in detail.

People's needs are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Homelessness, substance misuse, reoffending and mental ill-health are all challenging issues; together they create a level of complexity that can be difficult to address. Combined substance misuse and mental ill-health are particularly prevalent among Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries, but too often having one is a barrier to getting help with the other.

Needs and experiences change over people's life course, so services need to take this into account. While the needs of some young people may be less severe, it's important they get the necessary support to avoid issues becoming more entrenched. The usual concerns of ageing are amplified for people with multiple needs; older beneficiaries have worse physical health and lower levels of self-care.

Women's needs are different from men's, but just as complex. They are more likely than men to have higher levels of overall need and risk on entering the Fulfilling Lives programme. Women's experience of multiple needs mean they may be under-represented in some statistics, yet they make up over a third of all Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries. It is important that the particular needs and concerns of women are taken into account when designing services.

People with Asian ethnicity are under-represented among Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries – just 2 per cent are Asian, compared to 11 per cent of the wider population. More bespoke approaches may be needed to engage and support this group.

Homelessness, substance misuse, reoffending and mental ill-health are further complicated by other factors. Many Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries also have other disabilities and/or long-term health problems. Services for people with multiple needs also need to encompass social and physical healthcare.



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Many Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries have no qualifications and problems with literacy. Services need to be simple to access, information easy to read and understand, and a choice of communication methods available.

Many are also a long way from entering the labour market when they join the programme. Ensuring secure sources of income is important to help people avoid resorting to unsafe alternatives.

Accommodation patterns can be chaotic. Stable accommodation is a vital foundation for a fulfilling life. But addressing homelessness for people with multiple needs may not be as straightforward as just providing a home. Additional support to maintain tenancies is required.

Read the full report here: www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/6370-2

3. What makes a difference

It is possible to engage with and help those with the most complex and entrenched needs. Personalised support is needed to accommodate different patterns of progress and recovery.

Too often people with multiple needs are denied the support they need. They may be labelled as too high risk to work with, 'hard to reach' or the extreme poverty and difficulties people find themselves in may be viewed as 'lifestyle choices'. Fulfilling Lives shows that it is possible to help this group.

What is more, those with the most complex and entrenched needs make the most progress. It appears that the type of support provided by Fulfilling Lives is effective in addressing immediate chaos and helping to reduce risky and negative behaviours.

People's pathways of progress and recovery are different. Relapses and set-backs are part of this pathway. It is essential that services acknowledge and accommodate this reality rather than punish it by excluding people or closing cases. Some people will take longer than others to make progress.

Once superficial and presenting issues are addressed, the journey towards self-reliance and a fulfilling life is a long-term endeavour. Short-term, time-limited services are unlikely to provide the help needed.

Gender-specific services are needed to meet the particular needs of women. While Fulfilling Lives is effective at engaging women, they are more likely than men to leave the programme with a negative rather than positive destination. Generic services (which may have been designed around the needs of men) do not appear to be effective for women.

Getting specialist help with substance misuse and counselling/therapy are linked to early improvements in beneficiary wellbeing. Yet, relatively few people get this type of service. Improving access to mental health and substance misuse support for people with multiple needs should be a priority.

Read the full report here: www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/what-makes-a-difference-new-briefing-published



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4. What has Fulfilling Lives achieved



After a year on the programme people have improved self-reliance and independence and are engaging better with services.

Fulfilling Lives has been successful in achieving its aim of working with those with the most complex needs and affected by the most severe forms of disadvantage. Beneficiaries have made progress and reduced their use of negative and crisis services.

After a year on the programme people have improved self-reliance and independence and are engaging better with services. Progress is made with emotional and mental health, managing accommodation and building relationships.

Although roughly a third of people have dropped out, more have left for positive reasons. The programme has a lower drop-out rate than some other projects working with people with less-complex needs.

After a year with Fulfilling Lives there is a reduction in rough sleeping. People are also less likely to use crisis services, such as A&E, and to be involved in the criminal justice system.

A fulfilled life is more than just addressing basic needs such as accommodation. Over time, Fulfilling Lives beneficiaries are also increasing participation in positive social, cultural and wellbeing activities. And more people are beginning to give something back through volunteering.

Read the full report here: www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/what-has-fulfilling-lives-achieved-new-briefing-published-today

Matthew had been homeless in Bristol for over ten years when the Bristol Fulfilling Lives partnership, Golden Key, first began working with him. Matthew had a long history of trauma, repeated involvement with the police, long-term alcohol dependency and several serious physical health conditions. Fulfilling Lives worked not just to secure him a flat but also to support him to adjust to life indoors. He is now settled in the flat, getting help with his health issues and has had no contact with the criminal justice system since being housed.

Read Matthew's story here: www.multipliedisadvantageday.org/matthews-story

Notes

1. Bramley, G. and Fitzpatrick, S. (2015) *Hard Edges: Mapping severe and multiple disadvantage*
Lankelly Chase Foundation
2. ONS (2018) *Deaths of Homeless People in England and Wales: 2013 to 2017*. Online
www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deathsofhomelesspeopleinenglandandwales/2013to2017 Accessed 14 January 2019

About Fulfilling Lives

Fulfilling Lives is an 8 year National Lottery Community Fund supported programme, investing £112 million in 12 areas across England. For further information visit www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/strategic-investments/multiple-needs
CFE Research and the University of Sheffield have been commissioned to evaluate the programme.

For full briefings and accompanying method notes please visit the Fulfilling Lives evaluation website at www.fulfillinglivesevaluation.org/evaluation-reports/#324-evaluation-findings

Evaluated by



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