



Charter for Equality and Change

In the lives of those suffering Severe and Multiple Disadvantage



Funded by the Lankelly Chase
Foundation
Supported by Homeless Link

**Lankelly
Chase**

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Profile of Severe and Multiple Disadvantage (SMD)

Severe and Multiple Disadvantage (SMD) is a term used to signify the problems faced by people whose lives are affected by a combination of homelessness, substance and alcohol misuse, offending behaviour and mental illness.

As children, many experienced trauma and 55% of people facing homelessness, criminal justice and substance misuse (SMD3) have a mental health condition that has been diagnosed by a professional.

As adults, many suffer alarming levels of loneliness, isolation, unemployment, poverty and mental ill-health.

Only 16% of people facing SMD consider their quality of life to be good or very good, compared to over 70% of the general population.

586,000 individuals received services across the three domains [homeless, offending, substance misuse] over the course of 2010/11.

Severe and multiple disadvantage is conservatively estimated to cost £10.1bn per year.

Taken from *Hard Edges: Mapping Severe and Multiple Disadvantage in England*

Summery

Historically the commissioning, designing and delivery of support services for those suffering severe and multiple disadvantage has been focused internally, meeting outcomes and targets, rather than externally toward the customer.

Systems and services have often represented customers by a number, unit cost or outcome and not recognised them as people and an integral part of the system.

Research shows that customers continually request to be involved in the services that they receive and that customers relate to and engage better with those who have had similar experiences to themselves. When customers become stakeholders in the services that they use, better outcomes are achieved.

Evidence shows that when faced with a challenge, if we recognise its complexity and then take a holistic approach to overcoming it, we achieve much stronger and longer lasting results.

By signing this Charter we the undersigned:

Recognise that in a system of transformation and change, and respecting the roles and responsibilities of individuals, that all have the right to be treated equally and without discrimination.

Agree that in order to create positive change, or the opportunity for positive change, we need to recognise the assets and wealth possessed by individuals, associations, organisations and authorities.

That together we will uphold the following principles of the Charter for Equality and Change:

1. *Equality*: Everyone has the right to have their voice heard and listened to.
2. *Respect*: Everyone has the right to have themselves and their views respected.
3. *Non-judgemental*: Everyone has the right to be heard and seen without judgement.
4. *Inclusivity*: The commissioning, designing, and delivery of services is an “inclusive” process and the responsibility of all stakeholders.
5. *Fairness*: Support is given in an agreed way that is proportionate to need and focuses on aspirations.
6. *Solution focused*: Systems, and stakeholders within the systems, should recognise and listen to need and look both internally and externally for solutions that respond to that need.
7. *Change*: That the systems and stakeholders within the systems are open to change whilst at the same time recognising the challenges that change brings.
8. *Impact*: Stakeholders are clear about the impact that they can and do have and use this as a basis for continuous improvement.

Rights to fair access and use

All individuals, organisations and authorities have the right to use the Charter to begin and maintain meaningful dialogue with other interested parties.

All individuals, organisations and authorities using the Charter recognise the rights of all other parties involved in common communication.

All individuals, organisations and authorities have the right to request that whilst engaging or attempting to engage with other concerned parties that the other party recognise the Charter and the rights afforded to those who are adhering to its principles.

Resource Management

Feantsa have an open source participation tool kit [here](#) that can be used in support of the Charter to measure and evaluate stakeholder [customer] involvement, as well as provide a comprehensive tool set to assist engagement and dialogue.

Hard Edges: [Hard Edges: Mapping Severe and Multiple Disadvantage in England](#) draws together previously separate datasets from homelessness, offending and substance misuse treatment systems. It also takes into account available data around mental health and poverty. It delivers the latest and most comprehensive statistics on people facing severe and multiple disadvantage: where they live, what their lives are like, how effectively they are supported by services, and the economic implications of the disadvantages they face.

Definitions

Severe and Multiple Disadvantage (SMD): Is a term used to signify the problems faced by people whose lives are affected by a combination of homelessness, substance and alcohol misuse, offending behaviour and mental ill-health.

Stakeholder: *a person such as an employee, customer, or citizen who is involved with an organization, society, etc. and therefore has responsibilities towards it and an interest in its success.* In the context of this charter, the stakeholders can be Governmental, statutory, commissioned, non-commissioned or recipients of support services.

System: *a way of doing things:* The “system” that we refer to, and concerns us, is the system that supports people who experience severe and multiple disadvantage.

Who are Expert Link?

“Expert Link is a national project to amplify the voices and experience of people marginalised by homelessness, mental health issues, substance and alcohol misuse, offending, domestic violence and abuse. We promote the views of expert citizens, work to influence national and local policy, and provide smart solutions to make support services better.”

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