

Current issues

Positives

There have been some examples of positive practice this week. Within one area, the amount of support that people are receiving has notably increased over the past week; in another area organisations have been able to move faster than usual to seize the opportunity to support someone into detox. There is also an enthusiasm that we have an opportunity to build on the good work that has already taken place.

*“People are getting a lot more support now.” **Member of the National Advisory Panel (Westminster)***

*“Working really well. Someone told me she wants a detox... She’s in controlling relationship. I went to meet them, and they were both there with their bags, so they were off. That’s happened really quickly.” **Member of the National Advisory Panel (Blackpool)***

*“I’m feeling really optimistic... We’ve got the energy and the expertise.” **Member of the National Advisory Panel (Exeter)***

Uncertainty and working practices

There is concern amongst many working or previously working of how the lockdown has affected staff morale. The uncertainty of how long the lockdown would last has meant that in some instances activities have been put on hold, instead of adapted, with increased focus on crisis responses.

*“People are just getting really fed-up now. It’s hard to get motivated. Normally we would do loads of activities together but can’t due to isolation. It’s really getting to everyone now.” **Member of the National Advisory Panel***

The furloughing of staff has also had a negative effect on staff morale, as well as on working practices. Some people have had to cover roles that they were unable to, leading to reductions in the quality of support provided.

*“Struggling with not working.” **Member of the National Advisory Panel***

*“Trying to keep on the up, but loads going wrong this week which wouldn’t normally.” **Member of the National Advisory Panel***

Track and Trace

The announcements around track and trace have caused concern across many areas. Currently, people experiencing multiple disadvantage are more likely not to social distance than others, which is increasing the likelihood that people will be contacted by Track and Trace teams. There are also concerns with how working practices will be affected, particularly relating to the likelihood of teams of staff been called to self-isolate. It will be critical that guidance relating to track and tracing and homelessness settings is available in a timely fashion, with clear practical detail that understands general working practices within these settings. Expert Link would be available to support this process.

“I just feel like there are more questions than answers, on how it’s going to affect our people in accommodation, if someone is asked to self-isolate then what impact that is going to have on staffing. And what happens if a member of staff have to self-isolate, potentially we’re going to lose a whole team.”

Expert Link – National Panel

I feel like this is more scary than when the lockdown was first mentioned. I think we need clear guidance this time. We have been talking as an organisation that we need to provide that ourselves for our staff and our people, but the message needs to come from Government as well. We need to be really clear about what we should be doing and how it's going to affect us and what can be put in place.” **Member of the National Advisory Panel**

About Expert Link

Expert Link is a peer led organisation championing the voice of people with lived experience of multiple disadvantages, including homelessness, mental health issues, substance misuse, offending and domestic violence and abuse. We advocate for a world where people with lived experience of multiple disadvantages are treated as equal partners in decisions made about their lives.