

## Tackling Multiple Disadvantage – key lessons for policy makers

The Tackling Multiple Disadvantage (TMD) project was designed to support people facing homelessness who were also experiencing multiple disadvantage to pursue their employment goals. TMD was a Building Better Opportunities (BBO) project delivered between April 2017 and March 2020. TMD provided personalised coaching support and integrated training, volunteering, housing support, financial assistance and health-based interventions. The project supported 448 homeless people and achieved an employment outcome rate of 27 per cent, which is substantially higher than recent comparable projects. [Learning and Work Institute](#) carried out a full evaluation of the service.

This document draws on lessons from TMD to set out considerations for policy makers to improve employment support for people experiencing homelessness with multiple and complex needs. These include:

- **Homeless people should be able to access integrated housing and employment support:** TMD demonstrated the value of integrated housing and employment support for people facing homelessness. This model should be expanded to ensure that more homeless people can access support to address their housing and employment needs together.
- **Housing led approaches should be extended including the national roll out of Housing First in England:** Evidence from the evaluation demonstrated the challenge faced by participants who remained homeless and in temporary accommodation in looking for, applying for and sustaining employment. There is a strong and growing evidence base that Housing First as part of a wider housing-led strategy can significantly reduce homelessness, whilst also addressing wider needs. Moving people rapidly into stable affordable housing, including a Housing First model, alongside tailored employment support should be rolled out more widely to help people experiencing homelessness address their housing and employment needs.
- **Local cross-sector collaboration and coordination between mental health, criminal justice and substance misuse services should be promoted:** TMD demonstrates the effectiveness of key worker support and an integrated model to support people with multiple and complex needs including homelessness. Supporting people with multiple and complex needs requires local collaboration and cooperation across different organisations and services. There should be a focus on jointly commissioned specific services for people with severe and multiple complex needs, with a main contact or coach to navigate them through support.
- **There needs to be investment in social housing and sufficient financial support through Universal Credit to address the root causes of homelessness:** Many homeless TMD participants did not feel able to look for work until they had addressed their housing situation. Those who did find secure housing were often able to progress into employment. Social housing was viewed as offering the most security for participants. Moving into the private rented sector presented a risk of falling back into homelessness for people with fluctuating incomes in low-paid, part time or insecure work. In addition to effective employment support, it is critical to tackle the drivers of homelessness, through increasing the supply of social housing and ensuring sufficient financial support within the welfare system to address underlying causes of homelessness.