



Written evidence submitted by Revolving Doors Agency to the Communities and Local Government Committee inquiry into the Government's Devolution Bill

September 2015

About Revolving Doors

1. Revolving Doors Agency is a charity working across England to change systems and improve services for people who face multiple and complex needs, including poor mental health, and come into repeated contact with the police and criminal justice system. We work with policymakers, commissioners, local decision-makers, and frontline professionals to share evidence, demonstrate effective solutions, and change policy, while involving people with direct experience of the problem in all our work through our National Service User Forum.

Summary

2. Revolving Doors welcomes the Government's focus on devolving further powers to local areas, and the wider scope for 'devolution deals' set out in the Government's Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill. While significant attention has been paid to this devolution agenda in terms of infrastructure, employment, and local economic growth, such deals also present an opportunity for areas to pool funds and coordinate more effective local approaches to cross-cutting and entrenched social problems, such as repeat offending, rough sleeping, domestic violence, and social exclusion.
3. Efforts to address these challenges would benefit from a focus on coordinating more effective support for individuals who face multiple and complex needs. As with the Troubled Families approach, individuals in this situation have often fallen through the gaps of mainstream support, and experience a range of uncoordinated service interventions which fail to address their needs holistically. They place significant demand on local emergency and criminal justice services as they become caught in a negative 'revolving door' cycle. However, there is evidence that a better coordinated local approach could help to improve outcomes, reduce demand, and cut the amount of public money spent on ineffective and fragmented responsive interventions.ⁱ
4. In summary:
 - We welcome the current focus on devolution, and suggest that achieving the Government's broader aims of improving public services through person-centred support and greater integration, innovation, and localismⁱⁱ should be a key consideration in negotiating local devolution deals.

- Devolution presents an opportunity to support the expansion of ‘whole-place’ approaches, and encourage greater pooling of funds around cross-cutting social issues, including coordinating support for individuals facing multiple and complex needs. The government should require local areas to set out specific plans on coordinating support for the most disadvantaged adults as part of local ‘devolution deals’.
- The Greater Manchester devolution model holds opportunities to improve coordination of support for the most vulnerable, and will enable decision makers to build on promising partnership work already underway there around complex dependency; women in contact with the criminal justice system; and the overlap between policing and mental health. Lessons should be drawn from the wider public service reform approach in Greater Manchester so far to inform the design of other local ‘devolution deals’.

Multiple and complex needs as a priority in local ‘devolution deals’

5. In every local area, there are people caught in a negative ‘revolving door’ cycle – facing multiple and complex needs, living chaotic lives, and not receiving the coordinated support that they need to help them overcome their problems. They face a range of interacting needs at once, which can include poor mental health; substance misuse issues; offending; homelessness; unemployment; poverty; domestic and sexual violence; and past trauma. These problems are mutually reinforcing, and our mainstream health and welfare services, designed to tackle one problem at a time, struggle to respond.
6. The most comprehensive statistical study of overlapping need to date is LankellyChase Foundation’s report *Hard Edges: Mapping severe and multiple disadvantage*. This research mapped across key homelessness, criminal justice, and substance misuse databases in England to identify an estimated:ⁱⁱⁱ
 - 58,000 individuals facing all 3 needs (offending, substance misuse, homelessness)
 - 164,000 individuals facing two of these needs
 - 1,470 cases facing 2+ of the above needs in an average local authority each year
7. While the Troubled Families programme has received significant government support, there is no equivalent approach for *individuals* facing multiple and complex needs. However, with an estimated £4.3 billion per year spent on often ineffective service responses to people in this situation,^{iv} there has been growing recognition of the need for a more effective approach:
 - The first recommendation of the Independent Service Transformation Challenge Panel in their final report called for “*a new person centred approach to help specific groups and individuals with multiple and complex needs*”, linked to the devolution agenda^v
 - The 2014 Autumn Statement included a pledge to “*develop and extend the principles of the Troubled Families programme to other groups of people with complex needs from the next Spending Review*”^{vi}

- The March 2015 budget included a pledge on “*assessing the scope to reduce the estimated £4.3 billion spent because of a failure to support troubled individuals struggling with homelessness, addiction and mental health problems including through social investment*”^{vii}

8. As our recent publication *Comprehensive services for complex needs: A summary of the evidence* shows, services taking a person-centred approach and coordinating interventions that work intensively and holistically can help to improve health, housing, criminal justice, and wellbeing outcomes for people in this situation, as well as creating savings in the long-run through reduced demand on costly emergency and criminal justice interventions.^{viii} However, these services are often struggling against the tide, with public services operating in silos which are reinforced by their budgets and funding schemes, their systems of accountability, and the departmental structures of Whitehall.^{ix}

Principles of effective support

Through our research and local development work, Revolving Doors Agency have developed 10 emerging principles of effective support for people facing multiple and complex needs:

1. **‘Someone on your side’:** Lead professional approach, with opportunity to build consistent, positive and trusting relationships.
2. **Assertive and persistent:** An assertive and persistent approach to engagement that does not give up on people. Continuous and consistent support over a prolonged period, responding positively and constructively to setbacks.
3. **Tailored:** A personalised approach which addresses the full gambit of an individual’s needs and is culturally sensitive to particular needs of specific groups including women, people of Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and young adults.
4. **Building on strengths:** Supports the client to recognise and develop personal strengths, recognising more than a ‘bundle of needs and problems’.
5. **Coordinated and seamless:** Understands and links with other services, pulls services together around the client, helps clients to access and coordinate support through brokerage and advocacy. Ensures continuous support across key transitions, avoiding gaps in care.
6. **Flexible and responsive:** Flexible approach to support and an ability to react quickly in a crisis.
7. **‘No wrong door’:** If a service cannot provide support, they take responsibility for connecting the client with someone who can.
8. **Trauma informed:** Understands the emotional and behavioural impact of traumatic childhood and life experiences on clients and vicarious trauma on staff, avoids re-traumatisation, facilitates reflective practice, builds resilience and supports recovery.
9. **Coproduced:** Designed in partnership with service users.
10. **Strategically supported:** Has the buy-in of senior, strategic stakeholders.

9. Strong local leadership is key to overcoming some of the structural barriers that exist to embedding better coordinated responses for individuals who face multiple and complex needs, with local devolution deals representing a significant opportunity to achieve a more joined-up approach and to redesign how the system works for the most disadvantaged adults locally. Getting services right for this most complex client group should be seen as a key goal of

devolution and public service reform, and if local areas can achieve positive change people facing the most entrenched problems there will be from this to improve coordination of a range of public services. Therefore, **the Government should encourage local areas to use devolution agreements to improve coordination of support for individuals facing multiple and complex needs. Local areas should be expected to demonstrate how they would achieve improved outcomes for the most disadvantaged adults as a key part of the negotiations in local 'devolution deals'.**

10. This should include a focus on the estimated 58,000 identified in *Hard Edges* as facing the most complex needs, including overlapping substance misuse, homelessness, and offending needs. However, it is also important to note other overlapping 'clusters' of multiple needs that would benefit from a targeted, coordinated strategic approach within local plans. This may include:

- High-frequency visitors to police custody, A&E, and/or mental health crisis services
- women involved in prostitution (who likely to face high levels of trauma and complex needs)^x
- repeat victims of domestic violence
- repeat perpetrators of anti-social behaviour

A 'whole-place' approach - What should be included in 'devolution deals'?

11. As noted above, the problems faced by many of the most disadvantaged individuals cut across traditional service boundaries. An effective local response may require coordination of a range of agencies, including mental health; policing; housing; substance misuse; criminal justice; employment and welfare advice; and voluntary sector services, among others. To support this, a range of partners need to come together at a strategic level.

12. 'Whole place' partnership models, such as the whole place Community Budget Pilots, have been a key part of the government public service reform agenda, and hold significant potential to embed these partnerships. This could be strengthened by devolution of additional powers and budgets to a coordinating authority in a local area. When considering how local areas could achieve better coordination of support for individuals facing multiple and complex needs within devolution proposals, decision makers should look for:

- **Plans to pool funds across service boundaries.** Where possible, this should include health; public health; policing and criminal justice; and local authority funding, as outcomes cut across each of these service areas. Pooling funds in this way could enable local areas to achieve more for less, reducing the waste generated as a range of different agencies spend resources on failed intervention for this group, and encouraging a greater preventative emphasis by enabling expenditure to be directed where it could have the greatest impact.
- **Clear accountability structures,** with a named individual made responsible for improving outcomes for the most disadvantaged. Currently, nobody is accountable for adults facing multiple and complex needs.

- **Service user involvement structures.** Areas should demonstrate how they have involved people with direct experience of facing multiple and complex needs in the development of their plans, with plans for the ongoing involvement of ‘experts by experience’ in the design and delivery of their local approach. This should include structures to facilitate lived experience involvement at the strategic level.
- **Appropriate outcomes and outcome measures.** Service users should be involved in setting strategic outcomes, which should be realistic to working with a complex client group who are likely to require longer-term intervention and be experiencing entrenched disadvantaged. Our research shows that for people in this situation, stability is a prized outcome.^{xi} Therefore, distance-travelled measures such as increased self-reported wellbeing and reduced use of emergency services are important.^{xii}

13. The proposed model in Greater Manchester, which includes health functions and the community safety and strategic policing responsibilities of the police and crime commissioner role, holds significant potential to continue the promising partnership work already underway across the combined authority. **Lessons should be also be learnt from the Greater Manchester approach to public service reform so far, and applied of other local ‘devolution deals’.** This includes their programmes to: develop a ‘whole system’ approach for women in contact with the criminal justice system;^{xiii} the mental health and policing strategy overseen by the Greater Manchester Mental Health Partnership Board which is helping to improve support for individuals placing repeat demand on the police;^{xiv} and the work underway around complex dependency.^{xv}

Conclusion

14. There is significant potential for local areas to use devolution deals to help improve responses to some of the most disadvantaged adults in their area. Evidence suggests that developing a more coordinated for individuals facing multiple and complex needs could both improve outcomes, and cut costs through reduced duplication and reduced demand on public services in the long-run. Furthermore, such an approach could contribute to national government goals, from the Social Justice Strategy’s aim to improve support for the most disadvantaged adults to the DCLGs aim to improve support for vulnerable homeless people, and wider aims for greater integration in public services. As such, **we urge the government to encourage local areas to include plans to improve coordination of support for individuals facing multiple and complex needs as part of their devolution plans, and to require local areas to demonstrate their strategy to improve support for the most disadvantaged adults in ‘devolution deals’.**

For further information, or to discuss these issues with members of our National Service User Forum, please contact:

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Endnotes

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- ⁱ See Revolving Doors Agency & Centre for Mental Health (2015), *Comprehensive Services for Complex Needs: A summary of the evidence*. Available here: <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/comp-services-complex-needs-summary-of-the-evidence/>
- ⁱⁱ HM Treasury (2015) *A country that lives within its means: Spending Review 2015*, p. 16
- ⁱⁱⁱ Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., et al (2014) *Hard Edges: Mapping severe and multiple disadvantage – England* London: LankellyChase Foundation, p. 13. Available here: http://www.lankellychase.org.uk/assets/0000/2858/Hard_Edges_Mapping_SMD_FINAL_VERSION_Web.pdf
- ^{iv} Ibid, p. 41
- ^v Service Transformation Panel (2014) *Bolder, Braver and Better: why we need local deals to save public services*, p. 14-17. Available here: http://publicservicetransformation.org/images/2902929_ChallengePanelReport_acc3.pdf
- ^{vi} HM Treasury, (2014) *Autumn Statement 2014*, p. 29
- ^{vii} HM Treasury, *Budget March 2015*, p. 30
- ^{viii} See Revolving Doors Agency & Centre for Mental Health (2015), *Comprehensive Services for Complex Needs: A summary of the evidence*. Available here: <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/comp-services-complex-needs-summary-of-the-evidence/>
- ^{ix} See Revolving Doors Agency (2011) *Complex Responses: Understanding poor frontline responses to adults with multiple needs* for literature review and discussion of systemic factors leading to poor service responses. Available here: <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/complex-responses-2011/>
- ^x See Anderson, S. (2013) *Street Talk: An evaluation of a counselling service for women involved in street based prostitution and victims of trafficking* London: Revolving Doors Agency. Available here: <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/street-talk-evaluation/>
- ^{xi} See Terry, L., et al (2015) *A Good Life: exploring what matters to people facing multiple and complex needs* London: Revolving Doors Agency. Available online here: <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/goodlife/>
- ^{xii} A more detailed discussion of the importance of setting the right outcomes for this client group is can be found in Britton, S. (2015) *Adding Value? Reflection on payment by results for people with multiple and complex needs* London: Revolving Doors Agency. Available here: <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/adding-value-reflections-on-payment-by-results/>
- ^{xiii} See <http://www.agma.gov.uk/gmca/greater-manchester-public-service-reform/justice-and-rehabilitation/index.html>
- ^{xiv} Further detail on mental health and policing in Greater Manchester is available in our ‘PCC spotlight’ briefing here: <http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk/documents/pcc-spotlight-mental-health/>
- ^{xv} See <http://www.agma.gov.uk/gmca/greater-manchester-public-service-reform/reducing-issues-of-complex-dependency/index.html>